

TWELVE
SERMONS
PREACHED ON several
SUBJECTS
AND
OCCASIONS.

By the Right Reverend Father in God
WILLIAM, Lord Bishop of Durham.



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T W E L V E

SERMONS

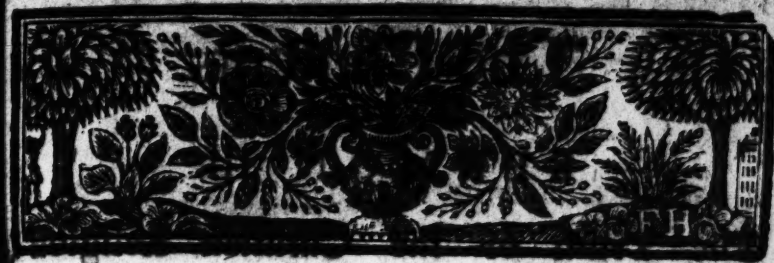
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ERRATA

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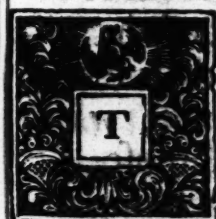


The Unreasonableness and Mischief of **ATHEISM.**

A SERMON preach'd before the QUEEN
at Whitehall, on Friday the 30th of
March, 1694.

Pfal. XIV. Ver. 1.

*The Fool hath said in his Heart,
There is no God---*



THAT there is no God, no infinitely Wise, Powerful, Just, and Good Being, that at first made this World, does still administer and govern it, and will finally judge the Rational Part of it: That there is no First Cause of all Things which is of itself, but that either there has been an infinite Succession of Natural Causes, or they have produced one another in a Circle; that is to

B

say,

2 *The Unreasonableness and*

say, according to the former. There have been infinite Men produced in the World before there was any Rational Cause of the Production of one; and according to the latter. That *David* was not only the Father of *Solomon*, but the Son of *Solomon* also; nay, mediately and remotely the Father and Son of himself.

Or, if there were a First Cause, that 'twas a necessary, brute, and unthinking Cause, which yet has produced rational, free, and thinking Agents; Effects which have Excellencies in them, which were no way in the Cause from whence they proceeded.

Or, that this World was produced by a fortuitous Concurrence of Atoms; that this vast and noble, beautiful and regular Structure, wherein all things are made according to Weight and Measure, all act orderly and constantly for some End; wherein appears the wisest Contrivance, both in the Fabrick of the several Parts, and of the Whole; and the Disposal of all for the Attainment of their several Ends, is the Work of blind Chance, which can neither see, nor design, nor dispose.

Or, if there were an Intelligent Being that first created it, that he abandon'd it as soon as he made it; and having once shut it out of his Hands, took no farther Care, but left the Administration of it to Fortune or Fate.

Or,

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Or, if he does concern himself in the Government of it, will never rectify those Abuses which he sees and permits in it; that he has no Rewards in Store, to bestow hereafter on those who love and obey him, whom he yet suffers to be evilly intreated, and miserable here, and many times so for his Sake and Service; nor will ever call to Account, or punish those who daily affront and provoke him, who yet meet with no other Returns for their Villanies here, than Security, Prosperity, and the good Things of this Life.

These are Things so irrational and extravagant, that one would think it hardly possible to find any that are Fools enough to believe or say them; and would not expect to meet with any Discourses against such, for the same Reason that there have been no Laws made against some Crimes, which have been of so heinous a Nature, that none could be supposed capable of committing them.

But the Scripture supposes there are, and may be such Fools; and our own unhappy Times afford too many Instances of them, who ridicule a God, and Providence, and Judgment to come; either deny his Existence, or allow him to be no better than the *Gods of the Heathens, that have Eyes and see not, Ears and hear not*: One, to whom *Elijah's* Sarcasm concerning *Baal*, may be applicable; that he is

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Talking, Pursuing, in a Journey; or, perad-
venture, he Sleeps, when he should observe
the Actions of Men, or attend to the Servi-
ces of his Votaries; who having vilified their
Maker, no Wonder, debase his Workmanship,
believe themselves to be made up only of
Matter, that as they live they shall die like
Beasts; their Bodies shall moulder into Dust,
their Souls be dissolv'd into soft Air, and
there's an End of them: Who have not only
defaced in themselves all Notions of Spiritual
Beings, but make it their Business to blot out
all such Impressions in others; and, as they
have debauch'd and corrupted their own Rea-
son and Faith, to assert and believe those
wild Opinions, which their Lusts and Appe-
rites suggest; and to acknowledge nothing in
Being besides Matter and Motion; so labour
to make a Party, and gain Profelytes to their
absurd Opinions and Practises. *They conceive*
Wickedness, and, when they come abroad, they
tell it: It rests not in their Hearts, but with
their Tongues they spit about their Poison;
and, with their infected Breath, endeavour
to spread the deadly Contagion wherever
they go. Who, to gain Reputation and Fol-
lowers, pretend to be the only free and im-
partial Reasoners, the great Abettors of the Li-
berty of Humane Nature, that have no other
End to serve, but the discovering the Weakness,
and

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and breaking off of those Chains where-with
designing and interested Man had enslav'd it.

Now, if Fools will be setting up for the
only Masters of Thought; If the most absurd
Notions shall be vented for *Oracles of Reason*:
If, not content to have fool'd themselves in a
Matter of the greatest Concern, they are in-
dustrious to delude others; and, like the
great *Abaddon*, restlessly endeavouring Day
and Night to bring others into the same Con-
demnation with themselves: It is certainly
an Act of the greatest Charity to them, as
well as others, to make their Folly mani-
fest to the World, to shew that they are the
most unthinking Creatures that live in it;
and that, whatever specious Characters they
aspire to, or would be known by, there's
none so justly belongs to them, as that which
the Spirit of God has given them in the Text:
And the attempting this is my present Pro-
vince.

I shall not go about to shew the Folly of
disbelieving a God and Providence, by prov-
ing that they are, or by answering the Ob-
jections to the contrary; not that the former
are not fairly demonstrable, or the latter too
formidable to be encounter'd; but, I think,
too frequent Undertakings to confute these,
are too great an honouring of them, and make
them look more considerable than they really

are, as too frequent Attempts to prove those may possibly be not of the best Consequence to Religion: And besides, the Doctrines that assert them, have been so firmly established, and the contrary Whimfies so shamefully baffled, both by Ancient and Modern Christians, and particularly in some Discourses publish'd in our own Language, that whosoever can now complain for want of Evidence and Conviction, and call for more, will still do so after the utmost that can be given him, and plainly declares he will not be satisfy'd.

And if Men are so resolv'd, resolv'd to be Sceptical as long as they can start any little Cavil and ridiculous Scruple, and so submit to no Conviction, but such as the things to be proved are not capable of: If they will not believe a God, an Eternal, Independent, and Self-existing Being, unless we can prove him from his Causes: If they will not believe Matter of Fact, which happen'd long before their Time, without Evidence of Sense: If they will not believe Spirits and immaterial Substances, unless they can see and feel them: The Man that should attempt to prove them upon these Terms, would deserve the Character of him that denies them. That therefore which I intend, is to shew,

That altho' all the Arguments that are urged for the Proof of a God, a Providence, and

and a future Judgment, should not be allowed to come up to a Demonstration: Tho' the Atheist has his Arguments against them, and the Sceptick his Scruples, which they think are not satisfactorily answer'd: Tho' they are not convinced of them, yet it is a very great Folly not to believe them, and to say, And persuade others that there are no such things.

I speak of a Practical Belief, such as influences and governs the Life and Actions; for I do not think that a bare Notional Belief of these things would mend the Matter; or, that the Man that should assent to them in Speculation, but deny them in Practice, would be at all a wiser Man than he that with Heart and Mouth denies them: No, he that is really convinced that there are no such things, (if Nature affords such a Monster) is not more so, than he that professes to believe them, but contradicts his Profession by his Life.

For the Object of this Practical Belief, I have added a future Judgment to the Existence of a God and his Providence; not only because these do infer that, but because this Judgment is the only thing the Atheist would get rid of, and the other are deny'd merely for the sake of this; because if they were admitted, this would follow; other-

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wise, I doubt not but he would be very well
contented to allow of a God that made the
World, if he concern'd himself no farther
with it; and would, without Difficulty, give
up his eternal Matter, his Fate or Chance, or
any of his lewd Schemes; nay, he could
permit him to administer the World too, if
he did not take notice of Humane Actions,
in order to bring them to an After-Account.
He has no Quarrel with a Providence for its
governing the World, as is plain from his
Argument against a Providence; which is,
that bad Men, such Wretches as himself, are
suffer'd to prosper and be very happy: But
this is a Wrong he could easily forgive him,
and could willingly submit to, and acknow-
ledge God's Government here, if he had no-
thing more to say to him hereafter: But that
he should see and keep a Register of his
Actions, that he should be privy to his most
Secret, Closet, Curtain, Bosom-Sins, that
these should all be written in his Book, and,
that for this end, that he may bring them all
into Judgment: This is what he cannot bear
the Thoughts of; and therefore being resolv'd
not to admit of this Doctrine, to him so
ungrateful and terrible, he is obliged to de-
ny the others, from whence this would neces-
sarily follow. So far is Fear from being the
first that introduced a God into the World,
that

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that Fear rather first made Atheists, I mean Fear of a Judgment to come, and the Eternal Retributions to be dispensed in another Life: To which Judgment, and Eternal Rewards and Punishments, I shall have a special respect in the Proof of the Proposition I have undertaken; which is,

That whether a Man be convinced, or not, of the Being of a God, of a Providence, and Future Judgment; yet not to believe them with the Heart, so as to practise and live according to such a Belief, and to say with the Mouth, that there are no such things, and infuse such Notions into others, is a very great Folly.

The Subject in this Proposition, is a Man not convinced of the Being of a God, a Providence, and Future Judgment; and a Man may be said not to be convinced of these things, who is in doubt concerning them, whether they be or not: He sees Reasons and Difficulties on both sides, that he cannot fully assent to either; or, he may be said not to be convinced of the Truth of one Part of the Contradiction, who is fully satisfied and persuaded of the other; the former Sense is more agreeable to the common way of speaking, but the other is justifiable by a very usual Figure.

That

That which is affirm'd in the Proposition of this Man, consists of two Parts :

1. 'Tis a great Folly for him not to believe practically the things therein specified.

2. A great Folly to say there are no such things, and to endeavour to persuade others so.

1. In arguing the former of these, I will consider the Man as not convinced in the first Sense I propos'd, as being in Suspence whether there are such things or not, the Arguments and Objections appearing to him as strong on one side as the other, and prove him to be a Fool if he does not so believe them himself, as to practise accordingly as such a Belief will direct and oblige.

2. In speaking to the second, I will consider him as not convinced of these things in the other Sense, i. e. as being fully, and without doubt assured of the contrary, and prove that for such a one to infuse his Notions into others, and endeavour to make Profelytes, is a very great Folly.

1. I will consider him as in Suspence, and doubting whether these things are or not; and this must be the Case of any Atheist that can think, and does do it: For altho' he will not allow that we can demonstrate these things, he cannot deny that we have very probable Arguments for them; and that is at

least

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II

least as much as he can produce to the contrary: For he will say, that the Arguments taken from the Frame and Origin of the World; from the Structure of Man's Body, and the Faculties of his Soul; from the Beauty, Order, and Harmony of their several Parts, and their constant acting for some End and Attainment of them: That these do not make it very probable that there was some Thinking and Wise Being, that made, design'd, and dispos'd them for their respective Ends? Will he say, That his contradictory Notion of the Eternity of the World, his senseless Hypotheses of Necessity or Chance, are a more likely Account of them? Will he say, That the Arguments taken from the Miracles that have appear'd in the World, the Works far exceeding the Bounds and Power of Nature, from the Prophecies which have distinctly foretold the most contingent and arbitrary things, with their particular Circumstances at the greatest Distance, and have been punctually fulfilled, from the Testimony, I believe I may say, of each particular Man's Conscience; from the Terrors which even Atheists have felt and own'd at the Approach of Death or imminent Danger; from all Religions in the World, which however silly and idolatrous, are an undeniable Argument of the Faith of the Professors of those
Reli-

Religions in these things? In short, from the universal Consent of Mankind, will he say, That these Arguments are not of Weight enough to put in the Balance, against the trifling Cavils of some few Scepticks in an Age, and able at least to keep the Scales even? Be it so then, that there are Arguments on both sides so equally poized, that the Man knows not which will turn the Beam; the Affirmative and Negative equally likely, there may be one that sees his Actions, and will eternally reward or punish him for them, just as probably as there may not; and yet he is manifestly a Fool if he does not believe there is, whether we consider his future State, which may be, or his present Condition in this World, which is certain.

I. Consider first the Future State, which may be; and this is two-fold; either,

1. A State of Happiness; or,
2. A State of Misery.

I. Let us begin with the Future Happy State, and the Rewards thereof. Now if it should prove, that there are such a State and Rewards, yet if a Man does not believe that there are, and practise accordingly, he cannot possibly have them; and therefore he must resolve either to believe and practise

for

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for them, or to quit all Pretences to, and Hopes of them.

To make a true Judgment then, whether it be or be not a Folly not to believe and practise so, we must enquire what those Rewards are, and what Damage or Hazard such a Belief and Practice may expose a Man to: For if there be something certain to be parted with, or adventur'd for something uncertain, and the Thing to be parted from be very valuable, and that for which it is to be quitted, be not so, or not much more so; in such a Case 'tis a Madness to venture. But on the contrary, where there is a vast Advantage on the other side, where the uncertain Gain is great, and the thing certain to be hazarded comparatively inconsiderable, there not to venture is Folly, according to the common Sense of Mankind. All Trade and Commerce in the World are a Proof of this; if it were not so, the Husbandman would never committ his Seed to the Ground, the Merchant his Ship and Cargo to the Seas, the Tradesman trust out his Goods, or the Gamester venture his Money; for they all venture something certain for uncertain Gain.

It may be said indeed, that in some of these Cases the Things themselves are certain, tho' they are not so of obtaining them; whereas, according to my Supposition, the Rewards them-

themselves of another Life are uncertain: And this is very true. But what's the Difference as to me and my venturing for it, between my being certain to obtain a thing, if such a thing there be, but uncertain whether it be or not; and being certain that such a thing is, but equally uncertain whether I shall obtain it or not? The Hazard I run in both Cases is just alike. And I dare say, the Uncertainty of the Weather and Winds, the Casualties of the Sea, the Want of Ability in some Men, and of Honesty in others, and the Difficulty many times of discovering either till too late, are better and stronger Arguments to prove the Uncertainty of the Husbandman, Merchant, and Tradesman's obtaining their respectively proposed Gains, than all the Arguments the Atheist has, or ever will produce, are to prove the Uncertainty of the Being of Future Rewards: And yet, notwithstanding these Uncertainties, Men think they act very rationally in pursuing the aforesaid Employments and Trades. If then the Rewards of another Life be of much greater Value and Consideration than all we are to forego or suffer for the Hopes of them, it will be Folly in the general Opinion of the World not to venture for them.

And that they are so, if they are at all, will appear from hence, that they are provided

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aided by an infinitely Wise, Powerful, and Good God; and by him proposed as the Sanctions of his Laws, in the doing, or forbearing of the Things commanded or prohibited; in which Laws, all that is to be borne or lost, in order to the obtaining of them, does consist: I say, they are what a Wise Being has proposed, as a Means to secure Obedience to his Laws; from whence 'twill evidently follow, that they must be more worth than all which that Obedience will cost us; for otherwise, they are not a proper Means for the obtaining that End, nor can he be a Wise Being that proposes them as such. Nay, they must be not only of greater Value than all the Things to be exposed or foregone for their Sakes; but of so much greater Value, as to be able to balance the Advantage which the Presentness of the other gives them over the Futurity of these; yea, and to turn the Scales in the impartial Judgment of a Rational Creature, if they are proposed by a wise Law-giver, as a Method to engage the Service and Obedience of such Creatures. Thus much we may gather from the general Notion of such a Reward, and the Proportion it ought to bear to the Service, the Hazards and Losses thereof to which it is annex'd. But, we are not left to conclude the Excellency of these Rewards only from such general

neral Considerations; for they are proposed to us ineffably great and glorious, beyond our Conceptions, as well as Words: They are represented under the most affecting Metaphors of Crowns, Scepters, Kingdoms, Thrones, Rivers of Pleasures; and these not temporary, fading ones, but immarcescible and eternal Enjoyments; not checquer'd with Disappointments and Dissatisfactions, but pure and refined from all disquieting Alloy. The Future Happy State is set forth as full of the most exalted Satisfactions and Bliss which an immaterial Soul and glorified Body, purged from its Dross and spiritualiz'd, can be capable of, where there will be an Immunity from all manner of Sorrow; *All Tears shall be wiped away*, and the perfect Fruition of all that's good and lovely; of Joys, which nothing can take away, nor any Accident disturb; of Pleasures, our Desires whereof shall increase by the Enjoyment, and neither have End or Period: In short, an eternal Freedom from all Evil and Weakness, and an endless Enjoyment of all Good and Perfection.

And now, what present thing can there be imagined, which any Man in his Wits will not venture, upon the Probability of obtaining such a glorious State? Suppose even Life itself, and all the Comforts of it, were that which my Belief and Pursuit after this

future

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future State should engage me to lose; alas! What are they? But short perishing things, which I must, whether I will or not, very soon, I know not how soon, part from: And will not the probable Prospect of that which is infinite and eternal, compensate for the Hazard of that which is but finite and temporal?

And yet, indeed, there is no such Hazard that the Belief of a God, and future State, so ordinarily oblige a Man to; neither Life, nor any of the true Satisfactions thereof, unless in some rare and extraordinary Cases, are thereby lost or endangered; so far from it, that they are rather the things which shorten Life, and disturb the real Pleasures of it, which this Faith lays a Restraint upon: None but such shameful, and only seeming Satisfactions, are prohibited by it, which, bating the after-Consequences, a Man's much happier without than with.

But were there some true and real Satisfactions obstructed by this Belief; yet a Man's very Belief and Expectation of these future Rewards, must needs fill his Heart with far greater Joy, than any they rob him of, altho' they gave him but a Probability of enjoying them.

For who is there that does not prefer the Satisfaction, that arises from the Hopes of
C enjoy-

enjoying a large and noble Estate, after the Death of a rich Relation, before the gratifying of a present Inclination? Who that does not willingly deny himself in some things, and break his own Humour, in compliance with the morose Temper of the other; and, at the same time, enjoy greater Pleasure in his Mind from the Prospect of what he expects, than he loses by that he has deny'd? And yet his Expectation can be no more than probable: His Relation may outlive him, or may change his Mind; may take Offence at him, how careful soever he may be of giving none; or may meet with some other, whom he may take a greater fancy to, and think he has more Reason to make his Heir. These, and many more Accidents, may interpose between the Expectant and the Estate: So that tho' a thing be but probable, we see the Expectation of it can out-weigh the present Uneasiness, the uncertain Hope abundantly satisfies for the certain Loss; and this, where there is no great Disproportion betwixt the Satisfaction deny'd, and that hoped for; this as well as that being but finite; how much more must it do so, where the Disproportion is no less than between finite and infinite, imperfect and perfect? Especially if a Man has embraced a true and firm Faith of these things, and evidenced it to himself and the
World

World by a suitable Practice ; what Transports, what Extasies of Joy must he feel? His Faith, that is such, does as infallibly assure him of the Being, the Truth, and Reality of these Rewards, as if they were proved to him by Evidence of Sense and Demonstration ; and from a reflex View of his Life, and comparing it with, and discovering its Conformity to the Terms upon which these Rewards are proposed, he finds his own Title to them more firm and better assured, than any Conveyancer in the World could have made it ; and then his Expectation must be less only than the Fruition, by that he antedates those future Pleasures and Glories, and enjoys one Heaven here, tho' he should meet with never another hereafter. What a Madness is it then, if it be but as likely that there shall be such Rewards, as that there shall not, not to endeavour by Belief and Practice to secure an Interest in them ; when, if any such there shall be, they will so very well deserve all we can do or suffer for them, and when this Belief and Practice are at present accompanied with no real Damage, but rather attended with so much Satisfaction and Pleasure?

2. Consider we now the other Future State that may be, the Punishments of another Life ; and we cannot doubt but if there be a

Judgment reserv'd for bad Men in another World, it will prove a Judgment worthy of God; and indeed the Miseries thereof are represented to us to be as great and durable as the Joys prepared for good Men. Now whether a Man will believe them or not, he must within a short time be removed from this present State and Life; and if there be another, and he has not by Belief and Practice seriously endeavour'd to secure the Rewards of it, the everlasting Punishments and Miseries thereof must be his Portion; and, in the mean while, what present Fears and Torments must he be perplex'd withal? For knowing that Hell must be his Lot, if there be one; and not being satisfied that there is none, he must, as often as he gives himself Leave to think of these things, be liable to the most severe and disquieting Reflections imaginable: He is sure of nothing in relation to these Everlasting Torments, but that such there may be; and if they be, he must be for ever miserable in them. Atheism indeed he chooses, and flees to, as an *Ashylum* to shelter him from these melancholick Reflections; But the Misery of it is, his disbelieving a God will not make him cease to be, if there be one; his damping and extinguishing the Thoughts of a Hell, will not quench its Flames, if a Hell there be; if such things
there

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there are, they will be whether he believe them or not, and this he cannot but know; and therefore how effectually soever the Opiats of Wine and Company may operate upon his Mind, 'tis not possible for him to secure himself from the most terrifying and amazing Fears in his sober Intervals and private Retirements.

But above all, when a mortal Distemper seizes him; when he is going to *take his great Leap in the Dark*; when Death arrests him to appear, for ought he knows, before the dreadful Tribunal of that Almighty Judge, whose Being he has deny'd: When in a few Hours, it may be Minutes, he must be taken hence, and may, for any Assurance he can give himself to the contrary, be convey'd thither, where he shall be experimentally convinced of the Reality and Severity of those Everlasting Punishments which he has ridicul'd; What Agonies must he then undergo? O! the Horrors of Mind which the Atheists feel at the Approach of Death! Would they but speak out, as some of them have done, they would own that one Hour of that Torment they then endure, is too great a Price to pay for a whole Life of Sensual and Sinful Pleasures. This then is the wise Choice and Resolution of an Atheist, in relation to the everlasting Torments of Hell. He is not as-

fured but such a State there may be; yet he chooses to disbelieve it, and, to run the Hazard do I say, nay to ascertain to himself an everlasting Habitation in those unquenchable Burnings, if any such there shall prove to be; and whether there be or not, in the mean time to make sure of an Earnest of it here, to make a sort of an Hell within himself, and his own Conscience his Tormenter; so wisely does the Atheist act in relation to the future State that may be: But 'tis possible there may be no Grounds for these Fears and Lashes of Conscience; and the After-Reckonings, which are the Occasion of them, may prove mere Dreams. Be that admitted, and let us see how prudently he acts in relation to his present Condition in this World by disbelieving them.

I suppose I need not prove that the Faith and Belief of these Doctrines of a God and future State, do engage a Man to the Practice of all Moral Vertues, with respect to himself or others, and to the Performance of all those Duties which belong to the several Relations he stands in; or that the Neglect of these, and the doing the contrary, are owing to the Disbelief and want of due Consideration of them. Let us try then who is the wisest Man, as to the Purposes of this World, he who lives in the Practice of such
Vertues

Mischief of A T H E I S M. 23

Vertues and Duties, or he that gives himself up to the contrary; Who is in the happier Condition here, the Man that holds a Hand over his Sensual Appetites and Lusts, or he that looses the Reins, and lets them have their Head; he that keeps the Mastery over his Passions, or he that makes himself a Slave to them; he that maintains the just Authority of the Man over the Beast, or he that suffers the Brute to ride the Man?

The sober Man, that by a strict Practice of Temperance and Continence, if not encreases, at least preserves his Estate from Decay, maintains his Body in Health and Vigour, keeps his Mind serene and clear, and prolongs his Life, and with it a just Sense and Relish of the true Pleasures of Life; or he, that by Rioting and Drunkenness, by Chambering and Wantonness, consumes his Estate, enervates his Body, clouds and weakens his Understanding, offers all these a Sacrifice, and falls himself an untimely Martyr to his Bottle or Strumpet?

The meek Man, that can bend before a Storm, and suffer it to blow over him; or he that by standing up against, and stiffly resisting it, encreases its Force and Violence, and exposes himself to its Fury; he that is not disordered and ruffled by every Affront and little Iniury, but is so truly great as

to overlook one, and to forgive the other; that suffers not foul and reproachful Language to discompose his Mind, or provoke an Acknowledgment that he is gall'd by revenging it on him that gave it; but by the undisturbed Calmness of his Breast, which shews itself in his Words and Actions, convinces him that he has thrown away his Dirt upon one on whom it will not stick, and confutes the Calumny by despising it; or he that lets every Trivial, it may be only supposed wrong, disquiet him and raise his Passion, every Breath of a foul Mouth blow up a Storm within him, hurry him on to indecent, and many times dangerous Expressions of his Resentment; who for having been call'd a Fool, will expose his Life in Revenge of the Affront; and by hazarding what is most valuable upon so trifling Occasion, justifies his Adversary's Words, and proves himself really to be what he was call'd?

Who does best consult his Ease and Satisfaction; he that is content with his Condition and State of Life, which he endeavours to make comfortable by a moderate Use of the good things he enjoys, or he that is querulously complaining and repining at his present Lot, anxiously solicitous for the Future, that spends all his Time and Strength in scraping together and heaping up of Wealth,
which,

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which, when he hath laid up in never so great Abundance, he cannot find in his Heart to be ever the better for, but will starve in the midst of Plenty; and though surrounded with Bags and Coffers, endure all the Uneasiness and Miseries of Poverty, and live poor only that he may die rich?

Who best consults his Profit and Advantage, he that uses a conscientious Industry in an honest Profession or Calling, that lives within Bounds, is vertuously frugal, and prudently manages what he has to the best Advantage, or he that spends his Time in Sloth and Idleness, in Luxury and Extravagance, in Rioting and Gaming?

Who best consults his Reputation and Honour, he that lives in the Exercise of Justice and Probity, Temperance and Sobriety, Beneficence and Charity, Courtesy and Affability, and that does all the Good he can, according to his Circumstances and Condition of Life; Vertues that make a Man shine, and give him a Lustre in the Eyes and Opinions even of those who do not practise them; or he that gives himself to Oppression and Cheating, to Lust and Debauchery, to Sordidness and Incompassion, to Moroseness and ill Nature; Vices, which they that are guilty of them, are glad to disguise and varnish over

over, and ashamed to own in their genuine Complexion?

These are things that will not bear a Dispute, but a Verdict must be given for the former, at the very first Appearance at the Bar of impartial Reason. Since then these vertuous Practices, which the Belief of a God and a future State will engage a Man in, are so very advantageous in this Life, that he that throws off that Belief, does at the same time part with not only all Hopes of Happiness hereafter, but also with the great and only certain Instrument and Procurer of Happiness in present; we may conclude, that he that believes, that *in this Life only he has Hope*, is even as to this Life of *all Men the most miserable*; and therefore he that chooses so to believe, when there are not wanting as strong Arguments on the other side to persuade him to believe otherwise and be happy, has certainly the justest Title to the Character in the Text; unless perhaps he may lay a better Claim to it, that says, not only in his Heart, but with his Mouth, *That there is no God*, and labours to persuade others so: For,

2. He that does that is a very great Fool, although he were fully satisfied himself, and without all doubt convinced that there is none.

Mischief of A T H E I S M. 27

A Man so convinced, has nothing to restrain his Appetites, and check his Inclinations, or hinder him when he has Power and Ability from serving them, but the Fear of the Penalties of Humane Laws, and of what Men may do unto him; and therefore may gratify and indulge himself in every thing he desires, which he can compass with Security from them. No Sense of Duty, in any Relation OEconomical or Civil, can oblige him to the Offices of it; but whenever he's out of the View of the Law, he may break through them as his Interest or Inclinations direct. In short, whatever he has a mind to, tho' never so unjust or barbarous, if Power, Opportunity, and Privacy favour him, if he can order it that Men may not see nor question him for it, he may without any Fear or Remorse do it; and the Man who is thus free to follow his own Inclinations, will doubtless count himself a happy Man: But I am sure he's a very great Fool, if he endeavours to persuade others to be such happy Men; for that is to teach them in their Turns, when Occasion serves, to take the same Liberty with respect to him, and not to stick at any the greatest Injury to him, that may promote their Advantage, when they can do it without Danger of Discovery: So that how fully soever he be persuaded of his own Liberty, that

that those invisible Fetters, of a God, a Providence, and Future State, are but as Threads burnt with Fire, mere Pretences, and nothing else; yet 'tis his Interest that others should think themselves bound by them, and consequently his Folly to labour to undeceive them.

Let us a little consider this Atheist in his several Capacities and Relations; in his House instructing and seasoning his Family with his excellent Principles; and we may suppose him discoursing to them to this purpose; telling his Servants, that he expects only Eye-Service from them; that there is no Tye upon them to work or be honest longer, than he sees or knows what they do; and that whenever they can without his Privy do it, they may safely loiter away their Time, abuse his Goods, waste his Provisions, purloin and cheat him of his Money. Telling his Wife, that she's a Fool to think there's any Obligation upon her from her Marriage-Vow to respect him, or be true to his Purse or his Bed; but whenever she can with Secrecy do it, she is at Liberty to abuse either at her Pleasure. Telling his Children, that there's no Engagement upon them from a God, a Conscience, a Heaven, or a Hell, (those Bugbears that their Nurses use to scare them with) to reverence or obey him; that all the Duty they

owe

Mischief of A T H E I S M. 29

we him is grounded merely upon what they fear or hope for from him ; and that whenever they are out of his Power, if they can expect to get nothing by him, they may disobey and despise him as they please ; or if there be an Estate to descend to them after him ; if they think he lives too long, they may safely wish for his Death, and if they can handsomely and privately do it, procure it too. Let us consider him making Proselytes of those he trades or converses with, and this is the Effect of his Discourse to them ; That they are not so wise as they should be, if they do not, whenever they can without Discovery, over-reach him in bargaining, put ill Goods, and false Weights and Measures upon him, circumvent and cheat him in all their Dealings with him ; that there is nothing he has which he values most, but if they have a mind to it, and can by open Violence, or by the more secret, but no less effectual Methods of Perjury or Forgery, Corruption and Bribery, take from him, and carry the Matter so that the Law shall not take Cognizance of it, they are at Liberty to do it, and Fools if they think otherwise. Let us consider him in his Politick Capacity, as a Member of the Community, and see how wise a Man he is as to that Relation, in spreading abroad his Principles ;
by

by so doing, he does what in him lies to make Governors tyrannize and oppress whenever they have Power: For if there be no superior invisible Being to restrain them, what should hinder them from exercising that Power to what Purposes they please? There is not near so much Danger of persuading Princes to rule arbitrarily, in telling them, *they are accountable to none but God*, as in telling them, *there is no God for them to be accountable to*. This is likewise to encourage Subjects, upon any Discontent or Dissatisfaction, if they are strong enough, to rebel; for if they can overpower their Prince, they have nothing to fear here from him; and if there be no God, there's no Damnation to be received hereafter: This is to break and dissolve all Bands and Cement of Humane Society; that which is in itself a most likely, and has, generally speaking, been an effectual Method for the discovering and Confirmation of Truth, the ending of Strife, the obliging Men to the Duties of their respective Offices, and creating among them a Confidence and Reliance upon one another, is utterly rendred useless by these Principles: For tho' the Man that believes a God, a Being of infinite Knowledge, Truth, Justice, and Power, can hardly be supposed in a Matter which he knows to be false, or never intends

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tends to call such a one to attest the Truth
of what he asserts or promises, and to punish
him eternally if he prevaricates in either:
yet 'tis ridiculous to think this Method can
be of force to any good Purpose among Men
persuaded that there is no God; or that they
can look upon themselves obliged to speak
truly, or perform what they promise, by
calling one to be a Witness of their Truth,
and Revenger of their Falshood, whom they
look upon to be what *S. Paul* says of an
idol, *nothing in the World*. What a distract-
ed, wild, uncomfortable, and dangerous
place must a Nation be, where such Princi-
ples should generally prevail? What a con-
stant Watch and Guard must Men necessarily
be upon? What continual Fears and Jealou-
sies, and Distrusts of each other must they be
perplex'd with? What Security can a Man
have for his Property, or Life, or any thing
he enjoys? I mean a Man of these Princi-
ples: For he that believes a God, and lives
accordingly, has a Security to trust to, even
among a Society of such Devils; for he knows
that God, that rules and commands the in-
fernal Spirits, can govern and restrain these;
and if he does his Duty, he can safely trust
himself and all his Concerns in his Hands:
But the Atheist, who has no God to hinder
him, when he has Opportunity, from inva-
ding

ing what is another's, has no Providence to secure him from the Reprizals which others like himself may make upon him.

If then what I have now offered be the genuine Interpretation and necessary Consequences of these Discourses and Principles as certainly they are, then he who makes it his Business to propagate such Discourses where-ever he comes, and instill such Principles into others, does very ill consult his Interest in this Life; and he that believes there is never another Life, and acts so contrary to his Interest in this, may very well pass for a Fool.

I will only beg Leave to make two or three brief Inferences from what has been discoursed, and so conclude. And,

1. From what I have now said of the ill Influence of Atheistical Discourses and Principles upon Kingdoms and Societies of Men, we may inferr the great Obligation that lies upon Princes, and all in Authority, to use their utmost Endeavours for the suppressing of such Discourses, and the rooting out of such Principles among those under their Government. And if the Disease be become incurable in any who have long received the Contagion, and in whom it is grown inveterate, at least to set a Mark upon such, and restrain them from infecting others,

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we shut up Persons infected with the
plague, and clap a Cross upon their Doors;
and this not only for the Vindication of the
honour of that God, whose Vicegerents they
are, and whom they represent; but also for
the Security of their own just Authority, and
of the Properties, Peace, and Happiness of
those committed to their Charge: All which
are struck at by the direct and immediate
Tendency of these Principles.

He that teaches Men to be subject to the
Higher Powers, *not for Conscience Sake, but*
only for Wrath, teaches them to resist and re-
bel whenever their Strength and Numbers
can secure them from any Dread of that
Wrath; and he that persuades Men that
there is no Obligation to abstain from what
is their Neighbours, but what the Law lays
upon them; no Restraint, but want of Abi-
lity or Opportunity, does throw down all the
Fences, and lay open every Man's Property;
to the Invasion of as many as hearken to his
Suggestions, whenever they are out of the
View and Reach of the Law, and have Power;
and a fair Occasion favours the Attempt.
There's no Conspiracy so dangerous to Sove-
reign Princes as a Combination of Atheists;
to spread abroad their desperate Opinions,
and make Profelytes in their Kingdoms: And
they whom Necessity drives to rob Houses, or
D upon

upon the Highway, are but puny Offenders against particular Men's Properties, and the Peace of the Community, in Comparison of them ; for they teach Men, whenever they can securely be so, to be Traytors, Thieves and Murderers upon Principle.

2. If the Character of a Fool does so justly belong to the Atheist, that whoever says a Man is an Atheist, says at the same time he is a Fool ; This Consideration, I should think, if nothing else, should be of Force to keep all those whom their Birth and Estate, Quality and Circumstances as to this World, have raised above the common Level from being Atheists, at least from owning themselves such, and boasting of it : These are generally more jealous of their Reputations, and sensible of any thing that touches their Honour than other Men ; and commonly they are not more tender in any thing, nor do feel any Reflections more quickly, than those that are made upon their Understanding. To be call'd a Fool is an Affront they cannot bear, nor is it to be expiated with less than the Blood of him that gave it ; and can they be content to do that ; and is it a thing to be gloried in, which will prove them the greatest Fools, according to the infallible Oracle pronounced by him who cannot be deceived, and with whom 'tis to no purpose, at least to no good purpose,

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purpose, to be angry? Which will also render them so in the Opinion of all wise Men, who are the only Men capable of judging? And this Atheism effectually does. How industrious and zealous then should any that have unhappily labour'd under it, be to clear themselves from so foul an Imputation? And with what Scorn and Indignation should all that value their Reputations, reject the Proposals and Persons of such perfidious Wretches, who, by infusing Atheistical Principles into them, are robbing them of their Honour, and treacherously betraying them into the greatest Scorn and Contempt? He does not injure a Man's Reputation half so much that calls him Fool, as he that persuades him to be one.

3. *Lastly*, If it be Folly for those who are not convinced of the Being of a God and Providence, and Future Judgment, not to believe those things practically, how great must their Folly be, who being convinced thereof, yet live as if they were not? If Speculative Atheism be Folly, Practical Atheism is Phrenzy and Madness: Let us not then be wise only in Belief, and Fools in Practice; let us not contradict, but shew our Faith by our Works.

We profess to believe that *there is a God, and we do well*; let us not give the Lye to our

Profession, by disbelieving what he has reveal'd, by ridiculing his Word, abusing his Name, profaning his Day, despising his Worship, and disobeying his Laws; but let us evidence the Truth of our Faith, by paying a Religious Reverence to every thing on which his Name is call'd, by making it the Business of our Lives to promote his Honour, and by endeavouring what we can that his Will may be done by us, and by all Men.

We profess to believe a Providence that sees whatever is done throughout the whole Earth, even in the most dark and private Recesses, without the Appointment or Permission whereof nothing falls out, and which takes care of all things here below; let us not deny it, by encouraging ourselves in Wickedness, and crying none shall see us; by being guilty of Deeds of Darkness, and saying, *Peradventure the Darknes shall cover us*; by misimputing the Good or Evil that happens to us to wrong Causes; by forgetting or repining at the Hand from whence they come; by desponding Anxieties for the future, as if there were none that took care of us; by using indirect Methods to gain or keep Sufficiency ourselves: But let it appear that we are in earnest persuaded of a Providence, by always acting as in the View thereof; by doing every thing as in his Presence,

with

Mischief of A T H E I S M. 37

with whom the Darkneſs is no Darkneſs; and the Night as clear as Noon-Day; by looking, whenever the Rod is upon us, up to him, as the wiſe Manager of it, humbly ſubmitting to and kiſſing it; by thankfully acknowledging him as the Author, whatever is the Inſtrument, of all the Good we enjoy, by doing our Duty, and then faithfully in every Condition depending, and caſting all our Care upon him who careth for us.

We profeſs to believe that we have ſome nobler Principle than Matter in us; even Spiritual Subſtances, which cannot die: Let us not contradict this Belief, by making our Bodies the chief Objects of our Care, and ſpending our Time and Labour in looking after carnal and ſensual Delights, which no more belong to immaterial Souls, than Sounds do to the Eye, or Colours to the Ear; but let us juſtify it, by raiſing ourſelves above the little Satisfaction of Senſe, to a Contempt of all thoſe Pleaſures which Brutes may ſhare with, and excell us in; and by reſolving to loſe the whole World, rather than not ſave our own Souls.

We profeſs to believe that God has appointed a Day wherein he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs by that Man whom he hath ordained, who ſhall come in the Clouds of Heaven, in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels,

38 *The Unreasonableness, &c.*

gels, to take an Account of, and render to every one according to his Works; to those who by patient Continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory and Honour, and Immortality, Eternal Life; but to those who obey not the Gospel, Eternal Tribulation, and Anguish, and Pain. Let us not betray the Hypocrisy of our Profession, by neglecting to provide against the Coming of our Judge, by acting as though we never expected to be call'd to an Account; by saying with the Evil-Servant, *Our Lord delays his Coming*, and by smiting our Fellow-Servants, and eating and drinking with the Drunken, or by sleeping with the foolish Virgins, and slumbring while the Bridegroom tarries; but let us prove the Truth of it, by being upon a constant Watch, by behaving ourselves like *Men that wait for their Lord*, being continually employ'd in his Work and Service, having our Accounts always stated, and our Lamps burning, that at what Watch soever he comes he may find us ready, and we may enter into his Joy. Amen.



A Vindication of PROVI-
DENCE.

A SERMON Preach'd before the
QUEEN, at *White-Hall*, upon
Friday the 26th of Feb. 169 $\frac{1}{2}$.

HABAKKUK I. 13.

*Thou art of purer Eyes than to
behold Evil, and canst not
look on Iniquity; wherefore
lookest thou upon them that
deal treacherously, and hold-
est thy Tongue when the
Wicked devoureth the Man
that is more righteous than
he?*



Subject, which will almost neces-
sarily lead our Thoughts and Me-
ditations to a future Judgment
and State, kill our Affections and
Desires to the empty fading Vanities of this
World,

World, and raise them to the more substantial and durable Satisfactions of that which is to come; teach us a quiet Submission to the Will of God's Counsels, and engage us to a sincere Obedience to that of his Commands.

A Subject, which as it must be necessary at all times, so cannot be unseasonable at this; these being the great Ends which that Abstinence, those pious Austerities which the Church enjoins us at this Season, are designed for and subservient to: And these will be the proper Improvements of my intended Discourse upon the Argument now before us.

It is *S. Hierom's* Observation in his Preface to his Commentary upon this Prophecy, that the Name of *Habakkuk* is derived from a Word that signifies *Embracing*, and one Notion that he understands it in, is the Embraces of a Wrestler, who clasps his Arms about the Person he contends with; and in this Sense our Prophet has very emphatically deserved his Name; for in this Chapter we have him contending with no less an Antagonist than the great God, the Lord of Hosts, and upon no lower a Subject than his Holiness, Justice and Goodness; expostulating with him about the flourishing Estate and Prosperity of bad Men, and the Miseries and Afflictions

of the Good; as if his permitting thereof were inconsistent with those his glorious Attributes; for to that Effect he addresses himself to him in the Words I have now read.

But is it not a very bold and daring thing for a Creature thus to arraign the Justice of his Creator; for the thing formed to dispute with him that formed it, why is such or such thing so or so?

The fore-mentioned *Father* labours to bring the Prophet off, by saying, that he does not here speak his own Sense, as if he thought hardly of God for those his Dispensations, but in his own Person represents the Frailty and Impatience of Man.

Thus much indeed must be allowed, that it is not unusual for Holy Men in Scripture to speak of others in the First Person, especially when they blame or reflect upon any Fault in them. So *S. Paul*, when he had spoken some things in his own Person in the 4th of the 1st to the *Corinthians*, expressly tells them, that he had in a *Figure transferr'd those things unto himself for their Sakes*. And in the 3d to the *Romans*, 7th, says he, *If the Truth of God hath more abounded through my Lye to his Glory, why am I judged?* Which certainly *S. Paul* never meant of himself, but only personates an impious Objector.

But

But yet, that there is any Necessity for us with *S. Hierom* to excuse the Prophet in this place, as not objecting of himself, but only urging what Wicked or Atheistical Persons might object against such a seemingly unjust Dispensation, is more than I can see: This I am very sure of, that the best of God's Servants pretend not to Perfection, or to be without their Failings; and in this particular Case before us, we have several Instances in Scripture, as we shall see by and by, of Men of no less Character than *Habakkuk*, who have made the same Objection with this in the *Text*. But whether he objects in his own, or in the Person of another, I will not contend; be that as it will, the Case was this: He had in the Beginning of the *Chapter* complained of the Iniquity of the *Jews*, for which God threatens from the 5th Verse to bring upon them the *Chaldeans*, that *bitter and hasty Nation*, as he calls them, and that they shall *march through the Breadth of their Land, and possess their Dwellings, and lead them away Captive*. And then after he had in the 12th Verse deprecated this severe Judgment, and begg'd of God not to suffer those whom he had from the Beginning chosen to be his peculiar People, to come to an utter Excision; he acknowledges that *Nebuchadonosor* was raised up by God for a Scourge to the Wicked,

strength-

strengthened and supported by him for the
correction of his Enemies: But yet expositu-
only rates with him for suffering him to ruin, and
persons to grow fat with the Spoils of those that were
unjust not so bad as himself. As if he had said,
This is true it is, O Lord, we are a very wicked
and sinful People, but yet not so bad as the
tyrannous *Nebuchadonosor*, and his Idolatrous
Chaldeans. How then can it be consistent
with thy Justice and Hatred to Sin, to per-
mit the greater Sinners to prosper in their
oppressions of the less, of those that are bet-
ter than themselves?

*Thou art of purer Eyes than to behold Evil,
and canst not look on Iniquity; wherefore lookest
thou upon them that deal treacherously, and
holdest thy Tongue when the Wicked devoureth
the Man that is more righteous than he?*

Thou art of purer Eyes than to behold Evil:
This is one of those many Condescensions to
our Infirmities, which the holy Spirit is plea-
sed to make in Scripture when he speaks of
God, and means no more, than that Sin is
the most odious and detestable thing to God
that can be, as offensive to him as those
things are to us, which we cannot bear the
Sight of.

*And canst not look on Iniquity, (i. e.) thou
canst not abett or approve of it; for so the
Phrases to behold, to know, to look on, do fre-
quently*

quently signify in the Scriptures. *The Lord knoweth the Way of the Righteous*, says David (i. e.) he is pleased with, he does approve of it. And the *Lord's Eyes will behold*, or look on the thing that is just (i. e.) with Approbation or Complacency.

Wherefore then lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously? (i. e.) Why dost thou favour them with Success in their treacherous Enterprizes?

And holdest thy Tongue, dost not interpose, dost not hinder the Wicked from devouring, oppressing, enslaving, persecuting, murdering the Man that is more righteous than he, who comparatively with respect to the Oppressor may be said to be Righteous, or at least less Wicked than he?

The Words thus explained, contain an Expostulation with God, concerning that seemingly strange Dispensation of his Providence in suffering the Wicked to prosper and thrive, and that by the Afflictions and Oppressions of the Righteous, as if it were a Reproach to his Holiness and Justice.

Which since it is the main Engine, by which the *Atheist* endeavours to batter down the great Doctrine of Providence, and consequently to render all Religion useless: (For if God does not concern himself with Affairs below, if he has no Knowledge of what

We do, to what Purpose should we worship
 or serve him? Then is our Preaching vain,
 and your Faith and Works vain also; then
 they are not Fools who count our Lives Mad-
 ness, when we wear them out in the strict
 exercises of Watching and Fasting, Morti-
 fication and Self-denial; but we really are
 the Fools and Mad-Men that take so much
 pains, undergo such Severities, renounce the
 satisfactions of the World, deny our Appe-
 tites, crucify our Flesh, macerate our Bodies,
 &c. daily, and all for the Sake and Service of
 a Being that knows nothing of all this; from
 whom therefore we can neither expect Re-
 ward for performing these Services, nor fear
 to be punished for leaving them undone.) I
 humbly crave Leave to consider it very par-
 ticularly, and to examine the whole Force of
 it in this Method.

I. I shall consider the Ground or Occasion
 of this Expostulation in the Text, and of the
 Atheists Objections against Providence, (*viz.*)
 Bad Men's flourishing and thriving, and that
 by their injuring and oppressing of Good Men,
*their devouring those that are more Righteous
 than they.*

II. I shall enquire into the Objections that
 are made against God's Permission hereof, and
 the Atheistical Conclusions that are drawn
 from it.

III. I

III. I shall attempt a Vindication of the Divine Providence, by shewing the Weakness of those Objections, and the Unreasonableness of those Conclusions.

Lastly, I shall, by way of Application, shew what more reasonable Inferences we ought to make from this Dispensation, what practical Instructions it will afford us for the Government of our Lives.

I. For the Ground or Occasion of this Expostulation in the Text, and of the Atheistic Objections against Providence, (*viz.*) Bad Men's flourishing and thriving, and that by their injuring and oppressing of Good Men, *their devouring those that are more Righteous than they.* And here I intend not to dispute the Truth of the Supposition, but shall very readily allow it, and must profess myself so far from being surpriz'd or wondering at it, that I should think it very strange if it should be otherwise; for Good Men cannot oppress or take indirect Methods to thrive, they have a God above, and a Conscience within, which over-awe them, and will not suffer them to do it; nor can they be supposed to use such Means as may effectually secure them from the Violences and Oppressions of others; for the Good Man charitably measuring others by himself, and thinking that they would as little harm him, as he would them, or as he

had

had deserved from them, does not stand upon a constant Guard, nor use preventive Methods to keep off those Injuries that he is not apprehensive of; nor does he, when he sees them coming, use any Force or Violence to repel them, which may hurt the Aggressor, but chooses rather to suffer Injury, than to do it. But now as he lies thus open and defenceless, on the other hand a Bad Man has none of those Restraints of God, or Conscience, or Charity, to hinder him from falling upon the Prey that lies exposed to him: Tell him of a God that will execute Vengeance upon the Oppressor, and he cries out with him in the Psalmist, *Tush, thou God carest not for it.* If Conscience stir or offer to interpose, he rebukes it in the Words of the Devils to our Saviour, *Art thou come to torment me before the time?* And for Charity, or doing by others as he would be done by, 'tis a Thing that he has no Notion of; he is for doing by others, not as he wishes or desires, but as he believes others would do by him. And being very wicked himself, he judges all others to be like himself; and therefore, whatever Injustice or Villany he intends or is guilty of towards his Neighbour, 'tis no more, he apprehends, than what, were his and his Neighbour's Circumstances changed, his Neighbour would do to him. And whether he be-

lieve

lieve so or not, his Will hath no Bounds but his Power.

So that considering the natural Bent and Inclinations of bad Men, that they are the *οἱ βελόμενοι πλαστῆν*, in the *Apostle's* Phrase, *those that will be rich*, resolved upon thriving and gaining in this World as their great End and chief Good; and with all, that they have none of those Restraints that good Men are under, to check their Inclinations, or to hinder them from prosecuting them; and adding to this, that the defenceless Estate of the Humble, Meek, Patient, Charitable Man does invite and encourage them to fix upon him as their Prey; it is not to be wondered at, that *those that deal treacherously prosper*, or, *that the Wicked devoureth the Man that is more righteous than he*. And yet this is the Ground of this Expostulation with God in the Text, Why does he suffer it? Why does he look on and hold his Tongue? And what those Objections are which Wicked and Atheistical Persons make against his Permission hereof, we undertook in the *Second* place to enquire.

II. And there is not among all the various Dispensations of God to the Sons of Men, any that bad Men have taken Occasion more violently to object against, than this: For albeit the natural Tendency of things, the un-
guarded

guarded Condition of the Good, the unre-
 strained Propensions of the Bad, make it very
 probable that things would be thus, were
 they left to themselves: Yet how comes it
 to pass that God does not interpose; that he
 does not hinder the one, and defend the
 other? This has been a Stumbling-Block not
 only to ill Men, but to some of God's choice-
 st Servants; we find them often stagger'd at
 it, and not knowing what to conclude from
 it. Holy Job, who is transmitted to us as, in
 other respects, a very great Pattern of Pa-
 tience, when he saw the Prosperity of the
 Wicked, could not contain himself, but cries
 out in his 21st Chap. ver. 4. *As for me, is my
 complaint to Man? and if it were, why should
 not my Spirit be troubled? Wherefore do the
 Wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in
 power? &c.* Jeremy likewise seems to be at
 a very great Loss how to reconcile this with
 God's Justice, in his 12th Chap. ver. 1. *Right-
 eous art thou, O Lord, when plead with thee;
 yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgments, or
 yet me expostulate, or reason the Case with
 thee, Wherefore doth the Way of the Wicked
 prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal
 very treacherously?* But above all, it was the
 greatest Temptation to the Author of the
 73d Psalm; he confesses that his Feet were
 almost gone, his Treadings had well nigh slip;

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and

and why? he was grieved at the Wicked, he saw the Ungodly in such Prosperity. This makes him cry out in the 13th Verse, *Verily I have cleansed my Heart in vain, and washed my Hands in Innocency.* Nay, it had almost prevailed with him to make the same Construction of it that those wicked ones did, whom he mentions in the 11th Verse, who inferr'd from it, that *God does not know, there is no Knowledge in the most High.* And at this time, this is the great Argument which the Atheist uses to banish the Belief of a God and his Providence out of the World: For thus he argues from the Wicked's oppressing and afflicting the pious Servants of God, and prospering and thriving by it; Either God does not see, has no Knowledge of these Things; or if he does see, and has Knowledge of them, he either would hinder them, but cannot; or can hinder them, but will not: If God would hinder them, but cannot, then is he not Omnipotent; if he can, but will not, then is he not Just and Good; so that either his Power, or his Justice and Goodness must be given up, or else those Attributes must be salved by the Imperfection of his Knowledge; and so he pretends it a kinder, as well as more reasonable thing to say, that God does not regard, is not at Leisure to take Cognizance of Affairs below, rather than that

he wants either the Power, or Justice and Goodness to hinder such Irregularities: And thus the Knot is cut, instead of being untied; and the Atheist seems so tender of some of God's Attributes, as to take those Measures to secure them, which would effectually prove him not to be God, which is what he desires to prove; for the true Notion of a God, is a Being Infinite in all Perfections; and that Being that wants any, is not God; and therefore he that is defective in Knowledge, can no more be God, than he that is not infinite in Power, Justice, or Goodness: Thus these Disputers of the World, who through Wisdom, as the Apostle speaks, know not God, by their foolish Reasonings would dispute him out of Being.

III. But to vindicate the Divine Providence from these unreasonable Cavils, and to expose the Weakness of those Objections which are made against this Procedure, (which was the third Thing proposed) I have no more to do, than to shew that it may be very consistent with the Justice and Goodness of God to permit these Things; for the Objection is built upon the contrary Supposition; and the Atheist would therefore prove, that if there be a God, either he does not know, or cannot hinder these Things; because it is inconsistent with his Justice and Goodness to suffer them,

them, if he knows and can prevent them: But now if God may be very Just and Good, notwithstanding he does suffer and can prevent them, then is his Permission thereof no Argument either of his Want of Knowledge or Power.

I say then, God does see, has Knowledge of these Things; nay, he not only sees, but orders or suffers them; for nothing falls out but by his Appointment or Permission; all the Occurrences in the World are the Results not of Chance, but of his wise Counsel, the Effects of that Providence that extends itself to the most minute Creature; *not a Sparrow falls to the Ground without him; even the Hairs of our Head are all numbred.* And he can prevent and hinder these Things if he pleases; his Power extends to every thing that is the Object of any Power, to every thing that does not imply a Contradiction.

But though God does see and order, or permit, and can prevent these Things if he pleases, yet is his Permission of them not at all inconsistent with his infinite Justice and Goodness.

For the Proof of which, I will endeavour to make good these three Things:

1. That it is not inconsistent with God's Justice and Goodness to suffer Good Men to be afflicted in this World.

2. That

2. That it is not inconsistent with God's Justice and Goodness to suffer Bad Men to be prosperous here.

3. That it is not inconsistent with God's Justice and Goodness to suffer Bad Men to be the Instruments by which Good Men are afflicted.

1. It is not inconsistent with God's Justice and Goodness to suffer Good Men to be afflicted in this World, for these Reasons:

1. Because Afflictions in this World are not always Punishments, but many times excellent Means whereby God designs a great deal of Good and Benefit to those that are exercised with them; by which he weans them from the World, reduces them when they are going astray; tries, proves their Faith, Patience, Submission, Resignation to, and Dependence upon himself; by which he advances and increases their Graces, raises and heightens their Desires and Longings after that perfect State of unmixed Happiness, where no Afflictions can enter: And then when Afflictions produce such blessed Effects, when they yield such *peaceable Fruits of Righteousness*, certainly God is neither unjust nor unkind in suffering his best Servants to be exercised with them. But,

2. Supposing Afflictions to be Punishments, yet let the best Man that ever labour'd under

the severest of them, but look into himself, and he will find abundant Cause to acquit the Justice and Goodness of God; for *there is none Righteous that sins not*; the very best of mere Men have many Failings, are guilty of many Sins; which, if God should deal rigorously with them, would make them justly liable to eternal Damnation. Is God then unjust in punishing those that offend, and deserve Punishment; in punishing those with Temporal Calamities, that deserve Eternal? Nay, is he not very good and merciful in chastising them here for their Sins, and not reserving them for the dreadful Account of the other World? So that considering the Nature of Afflictions, that they are not always Punishments; and the Demerits of the best of Men, that though they were Punishments, yet they deserve much worse; it can be no Impeachment of God's Justice and Goodness that he permits Good Men to be afflicted in this World; especially since,

3. He has appointed a Day wherein he will abundantly recompense all the Troubles, and Sorrows, and Sufferings of the pious Man, with Joys unspeakable and full of Glory; when all the Pressures and Injuries he laboured under here, shall add Weight and Lustre to that never-fading Crown which is reserved for him in the Heavens.

2. As

2. As it is not inconsistent with God's Justice and Goodness to suffer Good Men to be afflicted, so neither is it to suffer Bad Men to be prosperous here. For,

1. As Afflictions are not always Punishments, so Prosperity is not always a Blessing; so let a Sinner commit his Villanies with Impunity, and to be a Gainer by them, is, it may be, one of the severest Inflictions that God lays upon Men in this World; there is not a more dreadful Sentence that God passes upon any Wretch in this Life, than that or such like as he pronounced against *Ephraim*; *Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone, let him take his Course, enjoy his beloved Idols, go on merrily in his Sins, he shall have no Check or Hindrance from me.* The Steps to God's hardning of *Pharaoh*, as the Scripture terms it, were the taking off his Judgments from him and his Land; whilst they were upon him, he promises, in Obedience to the Message which *Moses* brought him from the Lord, to let the People go; the Fire of Affliction, while he was in it, had softened and temper'd him into a Compliance with the Divine Commands: But when he saw there was Respite, the Rod taken off, the Judgments removed, he would not let the People go; when once out of the Fire, present-

ly he returned to his former Hardness, then the Impunity and Prosperity of the Wicked be their Hardning and Judgment, it is certainly not unjust with God to suffer it,

2. Supposing their Prosperity to be a Blessing to them, yet as there is no Good Man but has a great Allay of Evil mixt with his Goodness, so there is hardly any Man so bad but has something of Good in him, at least some Natural or Moral Good, some good Quality, by which he is useful and serviceable to the World. Now for God to reward the Natural or Moral Goodness of otherwise very Bad Men with outward Temporal Blessings, seems very agreeable to that Rule by which he governs himself in the Distributions of Rewards, (*viz.*) to reward every one according to his Works; and is so far from being a reasonable Objection against his Justice or Goodness, that no doubt the Atheist would more violently, and I am sure more plausibly object against both, if God should suffer that, whether Natural or Moral Goodness, to be altogether unrewarded: Besides, Bad Men are many times Instruments in the Hands of God for the Execution of his Purposes, and bringing about of his Designs, and their serving the Ends of Providence, (though undesignedly and unwittingly) God looks upon himself in some sort obliged to reward

ward with outward Recompences. It was the Case of *Nebuchadnezzar*, of whom though for his own private Ends he had made War against *Tyrus*, yet because he did thereby instrumentally serve to work God's purposes against *Tyrus* too) God says he will give him the Land of Egypt for his Labour; *wherewith he served against Tyrus, for he wrought for me, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

But, 3. Although Wicked Men should have none of this Natural or Moral Goodness, nor any useful Quality to Mankind, nor be any ways serviceable to the Ends of Providence, but were purely bad, without the least Mixture of Goodness; yet certainly cannot argue Want either of Justice or Goodness in God to try all Means to reduce these Wicked Men, and make them better. If God should punish Villany as soon as it is committed, cut the Sinner off in the act of Commission of his Iniquity, give him no space to repent, nor use any Methods to bring him to it, the Atheist would think this much more cruel and unjust. But for God to try whether a Sinner will be reformed or not, before he executes Judgments upon him, to afford him Time and Opportunities for Repentance, to shew some outward Kindness, bestow some Temporal Good Things upon him, to try if happily his

his Mercy will lead him to make use of those Opportunities, as it is a clear Demonstration of the Goodness of God; so is it no Argument against his Justice: Because if these Methods fail of their designed Ends, and the Sinner continues Proof against them, and unreformed by them, there is in the

4th Place, a Day of Retribution coming *the Day of the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God*, when Impiety and Villany, however it has escaped and prospered here, shall be sure to meet with its due Returns; when God's long abused Patience shall appeal to his Justice, and his Goodness that could not lead the Sinner to Repentance, shall aggravate his Guilt, and heighten his Condemnation.

So that it is no Impeachment of God's Goodness or Justice that he suffers very Bad Men to be prosperous here, because Prosperity is not always a Blessing to them; or if it were, yet possibly there may be something of Good in them which God may think fit to reward with outward Favours; or if they have no Goodness in them, his Blessings to them are but the Attempts of his Mercy to work some in them; and if they prove unsuccessful, his Justice shall be sure to be glorify'd at the last in their Eternal Destruction.

3. It is not inconsistent with God's Justice and Goodness to suffer Bad Men to be the Instruments whereby Good Men are afflicted: This seems to be the great Objection in the Text, *Why holdest thou thy Tongue, while the Wicked devoureth the Man that is more Righteous than he?* Although a Good Man may deserve Afflictions, yet certainly he does not deserve so bad as that persecuting Tyrant, or that cruel Oppressor; why then does that Wretch succeed in his oppressing and injuring of him that is not so bad as himself?

But here I hope it will be no difficult Matter to clear the Justice and Goodness of God.

For if, as I have already proved, God may, without the least Impeachment of those Attributes, lay Afflictions upon the best of Men, and they have no Reason to complain of either for his afflicting them, I cannot see why he should be censured for the Means he makes use of for the executing those Afflictions; or why he should be thought more hardly of for using Men for that purpose, than for employing any brute Instrument. If by my Sins I have forfeited his Protection, and my Title to my Goods, Estate, or Life, I am no more unjustly dealt with, if he suffers a Thief or Plunderer to rob me or pillage my Goods, than if he had suffered a Fire to consume them: If he suffers a powerful Oppressor, perjured

perjured Evidences, or a corrupt Judge, to take, swear, or give away my Estate, than if he had suffer'd a Storm at Sea, or any Accident at Land to ruin me: If he suffers a persecuting Tyrant, a profligate *Debaucher*, or suborn'd Witnesses to murder me, than if he had suffer'd any ordinary Disease to have been my Death; for both the one and the other are but Instruments in the Hands of God for the Execution of his Judgments: And If I have deserved those Judgments from him, by what Means soever he executes them upon me, I cannot call him unjust.

Yet it seems hard that those who have much more deserved to suffer, should fare better than those who have less deserved it, and should prosper and triumph in their Ruin.

But if (as I shewed before) this Prosperity of the Wicked is but the hardning their Judgment, whereas all the Afflictions they are permitted to exercise Good Men with, are but for the purging out of their Corruptions, the Tryals or Improvements of their Graces, and Advances of their Happiness; if this be only the Wicked's receiving their good Things here, of which they must expect no Portion hereafter, and the Righteous receiving their Evil Things in this World, that so they may escape the severe Retributions of that which is to come; then

the wicked Oppressors do not in the Issue fare well as the afflicted Righteous.

Besides, who else can be the Executioners of these Judgments but the Wicked? Can Good Men oppress, steal, persecute, kill? would they continue Good if they should? None other are capable of being these Instruments but Bad Men, who can be contented to thrive and gain by any Methods, how base or wicked soever; and who take great delight in any Instances whereby they may express the Enmity that has so long been between the Seed of the Serpent, and the Seed of the Woman, and of wreaking that Spleen and Malice which they the Children of the Devil will ever bear to those that are born of God.

In short, if there be any Injustice or Unkindness in God's making use of such Instruments for the Execution of his Judgments, it must be either with respect to the Persons that suffer, or to the Instruments themselves: it cannot be with respect to those that suffer, who having Corruptions enough to need Afflictions for Discipline, and Sins enough to provoke God's Judgments, he is neither unjust nor unkind in making use of the most capable and apt, whether Brute or Rational Instruments, for the laying those Afflictions upon them, which they stand so much

much in need of, or so justly deserve: Not with relation to those wicked Instruments for taking God's Permission of their Villanies, and suffering them to prosper and thrive by them, in the severest Sense: Yet if God has try'd, and they have been Proof against his former Methods for their Reformation, what Injustice is there in his giving over to try them any farther? Is God obliged to use Violence to make Men good, and to force them to be happy against their Wills? 'Tis enough that he has placed Heaven and Hell before them, given them their Option of Life and Death; that he has waited long to see which they will choose; that he has used various Methods to incline them to make a wise Choice, and to reclaim them from those wicked Courses which they are engaged in, and which lead to Eternal Death. If all this will not do, and they will neither be led to Repentance by his Goodness, nor driven by his Judgments, who can call God unjust or unmerciful in suffering them at last to take their Course, and to run into that Destruction which they would not be persuaded to avoid?

And thus, I hope, I have sufficiently proved that it may be very consistent with God's Justice and Goodness to suffer Good Men to be afflicted, Bad Men to be prosperous in this

World; and likewise Bad Men to be Instruments by which Good Men are afflicted: And if God may be very Just and Good in permitting these Things, then may notwithstanding that his Permission, be very knowing and powerful too; for his not doing a thing, which he is Just and Good in permitting, can be no Argument of his want either of Knowledge of that thing, or Power to prevent it.

Having now vindicated the Divine Providence from those Objections which the Atheists make against it, and seen the Unreasonableness of those Conclusions which he draws from Bad Men's succeeding in their Oppressions, and thriving with the Spoils of those that are better than themselves; I proceed, in the last place, to shew what more reasonable, as well as useful Inferences, we ought to make from hence, and what Practical Instructions this Consideration will afford us for the Government of our Lives. And it will be of very great Use to us in these following Particulars, which I hinted in the beginning.

I. Since God suffers Bad Men to prosper, and Good Men to be afflicted in this World, this gives us an irrefragable Assurance of a future Judgment and State; because otherwise there will not be an Opportunity to manifest

manifest that universal and impartial Justice which is essential to the Notion of a God, and which he constantly asserts he will govern himself by in his Distributions of Rewards and Punishments to the Sons of Men, whom he assures he will recompense according to their Works: For however God may very righteously, for the Manifestation of his Goodness, and to convince Men that not the least Good in any shall fail of its Reward, recompense that little Goodness or Serviceableness that is in Bad Men with some outward Prosperity here; since there is a Hell prepared for them, wherein they shall suffer the just Punishment of the general Impiety of their Lives; and for the Manifestation of his Justice, and Hatred to Sin, punish the Faults and Failings of the best Men with Temporal Afflictions, since a glorious Reward of all their Piety and Goodness is reserved for them in the other World; yet, if there were no such Rewards or Punishments to be distributed hereafter, these Dispensations here would hardly seem just. As sure therefore as there is a *God that judgeth in the Earth, and this Judge of all the World will do Right*; so sure, from the Miseries of the Good, and Happiness of the Wicked here, we may conclude that there will be a Day wherein the Scene shall be changed, a Judgment

ment that shall set all these things right and straight, shall assign to the Wicked for their portion an Eternity of Tribulation, and Anguish and Pain; but to the afflicted Righteous, glory and Honour, and Eternal Life.

2. Since God permitts very good Men to be afflicted, and very bad Men to flourish here, this should teach us that Lesson of *S. John*, *Not to love this World, nor the things of the World*; for it must necessarily abate our Love and Value for the World, to consider that it is a Place where the greatest Innocency and Vertue cannot secure a Man from Sufferings, but possibly expose him the more to them; where a good Man cannot be safe, but lies open to the Oppressions of Tyranny and Villany; where bad Men prosper, and *de-our those that are more Righteous than they*: Undoubtedly to a good Man this cannot seem a desirable Place: And then, for the things of the World, by which I mean the Enjoyments of it, the Power, the Honours, the Riches, the pleasures, from hence we may make a due estimate of them too; for certainly we must allow that God does best understand the value of Things; but it is very plain from hence, that in his Esteem, these things are not very valuable; for if they were, he would never suffer his Favourites, whom he loves, to be without them; and his Enemies, whom

whom he hates, to enjoy them; which since he does, it is clear that in his Judgment they are of no great Worth; and therefore should be of no great Account with us, because we are sure that the Judgment of God is according to Truth.

3. Since God suffers good Men to be afflicted, and wicked Men to enjoy Prosperity in this World, this should excite and enflame our Desires and Longings after the other World, not only because in general that will be a Place where the Scene shall be shifted, where the Wicked shall be made miserable and the good Man happy; but each Branch of this Consideration does mightily enhance the glorious Rewards that attend good Men in the other World, and therefore may justly raise our Expectations of them; for from the Afflictions which good Men labour under here, they may well conclude, that God, who sees and knows them, and cannot forget their Labours of Love, will not let their sufferings they undergo for his Sake to lose their Reward; and indeed, they have his Promise to rely upon, that he will not; for he assures them by his *Holy Apostle*, that their *light Afflictions, that are but for a Moment, shall work for them, not only Glory, but far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.*

And

And as the Sufferings of good Men, so the Prosperity of bad Men here may justly strengthen our Notions of those Glories that are laid up for good Men hereafter: For it is very natural to argue, if God be so gracious to bad Men, so bountiful to those that are Bastards and not Sons, as to indulge them a liberal Share of Prosperity, and the good things of this Life; then infinitely greater are those Rewards, and inconceivably glorious is that Inheritance, which is reserved in Heaven for those good Men that are his true Sons by Regeneration and Adoption.

4. What I have discoursed, should teach us neither to think hardly of God, nor to envy wicked Men when he permitts them to persecute his Church, and to triumph in the Miseries and Ruin of his best Servants. The Psalmist, when he had recovered himself, owns himself to have been *Foolish* and *Ignorant*, and a *Beast*, for grieving at the flourishing Estate of the Ungodly, and for entertaining hard and unworthy Thoughts of God upon that Account: He found, upon his going into the Sanctuary, that the Prosperity of those Men was but their being mounted higher upon slippery Places, that they might the more surely and irrecoverably fall, and that their End was to be rooted out

at the last; whereas whatever Persecutions good Men suffer, *the End of the upright Man would be Peace*; and therefore he acknowledges, that in all these seemingly unaccountable Dispensations, *truly God is loving unto Israel.*

I am sure we of this Church and Nation have found him to be so, and have Reason to say with one of the *Seven Brethren* in the *Maccabees*, that *though the living God has been angry with us for a while for our Chastening and Correction, yet at last he has been at one again with his Servants.* Though he has shaken his Rod over us, threaten'd to remove our Candlestick, and to permitt our Adversaries to lay waste our *Sion*; yet he has put a Hook into their Nostrils, and *sent his Angels to deliver us out of the Hands of our Enemies, and from the Expectation of all the People that hate us.* And though he has not yet so wonderfully appeared for the Rescue of some of our Reformed Brethren; whether it be that they are not yet mete for such a Deliverance, or their Enemies not ripe for Destruction; that these have not yet filled up the Measures of their Sins, nor the other lain long enough under the Scourge for their Correction and Reformation, or for whatever other Reason it pleases him still to suffer their persecuting

Enemies

enemies to tyrannize over them; yet let us
 have a Care of charging God foolishly for
 the heavy Sufferings of our Brethren, or of
 envying the long Success of their Persecu-
 tors, for *God is Just in all his Dealings, and
 Holy and Good in all his Ways; he does not
 afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men,*
 but when he has great Reason for it, and ex-
 cellent Ends to serve by it. And however
 the Prosperity of their Persecutors may look
 like unthinking Men; yet to envy it, is in-
 deed to envy them their Judgment and Re-
 probation; and to suffer the utmost Misery,
 the most exquisite Torments that the Wit or
 Malice of a *Missionary* can invent; or the
 Fury of *Dragoons* execute, is ten thousand
 times rather to be chosen, than to enjoy all
 the Prosperity and Success, all the Pomp and
 Power in the World, and at the same time
 to labour under the Guilt of so many sacred
 Promises and Oaths broken, so many solemn
 Leagues and Treaties violated, and under
 the Tears and Cries of so many miserable
 Orphans and Widows; the unjust Invasions
 and Desolations of so many Countries and
 Cities; the Blood of so many Thousands;
 the Rapes upon so many Souls, as well as Bo-
 dies, as the greatest Tyrant of this or any
 Age has to answer for. But

5. And *Lastly*, From hence we learn also that all these I have now mentioned, and, if possible, greater Impieties and Treacheries in our Adversaries, will give us no Security against them, if we by our Sins provoke God to give us over unto them. Possibly some of over-sanguine Complexions and Hopes may flatter themselves with great Assurances of Safety and Success, merely from the Consideration of the Wickedness of those Enemies we are necessarily engaged with, who, it must be acknowledged, are such that if ever the Wickedness of Enemies alone were a sufficient Ground to raise a Hope of Success against them, we might reasonably conceive such Hopes. But what I have been largely insisting on, may be sufficient to arm us against so fatal a Delusion: For God, as we have observed, does, and may make use of what Instruments he pleases, the vilest and worst of Men for the Execution of his Judgments; and therefore if we by our Provocations have deserved so severe a one, as that our Glory should be given up into our Enemies Hands, we cannot from their Impiety promise ourselves Impunity.

We must not then take our Measures from them, but turn our Eyes inwards, and see how things stand at Home: But, Blessed God! what a black and affrighting Scene

shall

of PROVIDENCE.

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shall we here behold? Should I insist upon the greater Light and Knowledge of our Duty that has been afforded us, the stricter Obligations to it, that our holy Religion lays upon us; the purer Way of Worship that we have been blessed with; and all the various endearing Methods that God has used to reform and *purify us to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works*: And then enquire, how we have answered these Obligations, what Effects these Methods have had upon us? whether we have been as much purer than our Neighbours in our Lives; as much more reformed in our Manners, as our Church and Religion are more pure and reformed than theirs; as much better in every Respect than they, as we have had Reason and Opportunity to be? Should I enumerate the particular scandalous Vices that are publicly committed and gloried in, whether those of our own Growth, or those we have fetch'd over, together with their fashions from Foreign Nations, and in both out-done our Patterns; Should I reflect upon the unthinking Life of many, who are as *without God in the World, for he is not in all their Thoughts*; who divide their Time between Sleep and Pleasure; and as they never call themselves to Account, so they as little consider that God will: Or upon the more daring

daring Provocations of others, who count it the greatest Scandal and Reproach to be thought Serious and Vertuous, and are afraid of nothing so much as the Imputation of Sobriety and Religion; who shew their Wit as they vainly think, in ridiculing every thing that is Sacred; and their Courage in defying God, their Consciences, and the eternal Flames that are prepared for them, whether they believe it or not. Should I undertake the melancholick and ungrateful Employment of ripping up these, of laying open that general Dissolution of Manners, that is too visible among us to be dissembled, it would easily convince us, that we have little Reason to value ourselves above our Neighbours, or to think ourselves *more Righteous than they*: But were we so, and were they much worse than we are, as bad almost as the Devil himself, and as odious in those *pure Eyes that cannot look upon Iniquity*; yet as it is no new Thing for a Parent to correct his Child with that Rod which he afterwards throws into the Fire; so neither is it strange or unjust with God to make those the Instruments and Executioners of his Wrath, and Vengeance here, whom he designs for the everlasting Objects of them hereafter. And therefore, whilst our own Sins testify and fight against us, 'tis to no purpose to hope

hope that the greater Faults of our Enemies should be any Defence to us.

If ever then we would raise to ourselves any comfortable Assurances or Hopes of being saved from our Enemies Abroad, we must first endeavour to be saved from our more dangerous ones at Home; labouring with all our Might, in our several Stations and Capacities, to help forward that great Design of general Reformation amongst ourselves.

'Tis a glorious and God-like Work; and however those that engage in it must expect the greatest Opposition from the Prince and Men of this World; yet, for their Encouragement, they may assure themselves, that greater is he that will be with them, than all that can be against them; and though they must wrestle both against *Flesh and Blood*, the Lusts and corrupt Affections of Men, and also against *Principalities and Powers*, against the *Rulers of the Darknes of this World*, against *Spiritual Wickednesses in High Places*, against all the Policy and Forces of the Devil and his Instruments; yet this ought not to discourage them, for they shall have the Strength and Wisdom of Heaven on their Sides; and that *God, who has begun a Good Work by them*, will (I trust) in his due time bring it to Perfection.

But

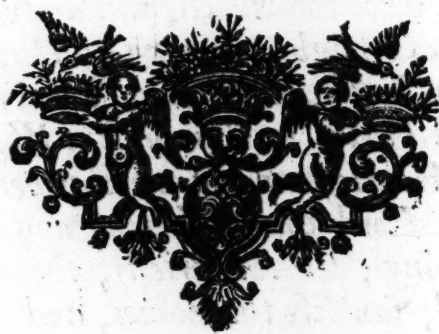
But till this be done by us, or seriously and in good earnest endeavoured, *while we have to be reformed*, what have we to do to take this Portion of God's Word into our Mouths, or to apply ourselves to him in the Language of our Prophet? To tell him that *he is of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, and cannot look upon Iniquity*, while we continue Evil, and our Iniquities are multiplied in his Sight; what is it but either to mock him, or tempt him to destroy us from before his Face? And while we persist in our Wickedness, and will be unrighteous still, how or with what Face can we, whatever Enemies we should fall a Prey to, or however barbarously we should be used by them, expostulate with God, *Why holdest thou thy Tongue, when the Wicked devoureth the Man that is more Righteous than he?*

No, if ever we expect Comfort in Contemplating, or Success in Pleading before God, his Holiness, Justice and Goodness, we must first become Holy, Just and Good ourselves; we must break off our Sins by Repentance, and devote ourselves entirely to his Service and Obedience; and then those Attributes of his will be our Security, under any Dispensations of his Providence, that the Issue shall be our Good and Advantage.

I will not presume to trespass farther than only to subjoin, that this is a very proper and necessary Work for this Time; both as it is that Part of the Year which the Church has more particularly devoted to Abstinence and Mortification; and I am sure, all our Fastings and Austerities, that do not help us to deny our Sins, as well as our Meats and Pleasures; that do not tend to reform, and make us more apt and ready for the Work and Service of God, are very vain and to no purpose; and also as it is the Season wherein we are going out to Battle against our Enemies; and if God go not forth with our Hosts, what Success can we expect? And how can we imagine that he should come into an Alliance with us, till we have broke our League with Death, and Agreement with Hell, and discarded our Sins, to which he is an irreconcilable Enemy?

Let us then turn away from all our Wickedness that we have committed, and do that which is Lawful and Right, denying all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and living Sobriety, Righteously, and Godly in this present World; let us rent our Hearts, and not our Garments, and turn to the Lord with Weeping and Fasting, and Mourning; let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, sanctify themselves, and weep between the Porch and the Altar, and say, Spare thy

thy People, O Lord, and give not thy Heritage to Reproach, that the Heathen should rule over them: Wherefore should they say among the People, Where is their God? Let all Orders and Degrees of Men among us repent and amend, and then cry mightily unto God; Look down, O Lord, from Heaven, and behold from the Habitation of thy Holiness and of thy Glory: Where is thy Zeal and thy Strength, the Sounding of thy Bowels and thy Mercy towards us? Are they restrained? Oh! our Redeemer, suffer not our Adversaries again to tread down thy Sanctuary, the People of thy Holiness have possessed it, yet but a little while. And then we may hope, that God will hear and have Mercy; that thus sowing in Tears, we shall reap in Joy; and that such a penitential Spring will be followed with a happy and successful Summer.



*The Truth of the Christian
Religion, asserted:*

A SERMON preach'd before the Rt. Hon.
the Lord Mayor, the Aldermen and Go-
vernors of the several Hospitals of the Ci-
ty of *London*, at *S. Bridget's Church*, on
Easter-Monday, 1700.

JOHN XV. Ver. 22, 23, 24.

2. *If I had not come, and spoken unto
them, they had not had Sin; but now
have they no Cloak for their Sin.*

3. *He that hateth me, hateth my Father
also.*

3. *If I had not done among them the Works
which none other Man did, they had not
had Sin; but now have they both seen,
and hated both me, and my Father.*

THE Church's Observation of *Easter*;
at this time calls for a Discourse upon
our Lord's Resurrection. Respect to
the particular Occasion of the Meeting
of this Honourable Assembly, would direct
me to the Subject of Charity.

I am

I am sorry to add, that the bold and daring Attempts, that are at this day made upon our Religion in general, necessarily require something to be said upon so Publick an Occasion in Vindication of it.

I hope I may in some measure answer all these Obligations, by attempting to prove the Truth of our Religion; as from other Miracles wrought for the Confirmation of it, chiefly from our Saviour's Resurrection, by which he was *declared to be the Son of God with Power*; and by endeavouring, in my Application, to persuade you to Evidence to yourselves and the World the Sincerity of your Faith in this Religion, by a Practice conformable to the Holy Laws of it, and particularly to that which, in the Extent wherein it is enjoin'd us by our Religion, is peculiar to it; that of Charity. There is so close a Connexion, betwixt the Christian Religion and Charity, that he that asserts the Christian Religion, is one of the best Advocates for Charity; and he that truly practises Charity, one of the best Pleaders for the Christian Religion.

In the Verses of my Text, and those immediately preceding, our Lord is arming his Apostles against two great Discouragements they were like to meet with in the Discharge of their Office, *viz. a violent Persecution*

their Persons, and a mighty Opposition to
their Doctrine.

Of both these, he tells them he had had
Share: And considering the Relation they
had in to him, that they were his Servants,
and he their Lord, they could not think it
strange if they should not be better treated
than he had been. These things therefore
they ought to expect and prepare for: And
for their Support under them he adds, *All
these things will they do unto you for my Names
sake*; All the Persecutions, Reproaches and
despightful Usage; that shall befall you, will
be upon my Score, who surely have deserved
them from you, and am able abundantly to make
good to you, whatever you can suffer upon my
account: And for the Opposition which
Wicked Men will make to the Doctrines
you are to Preach, let not that affright you;
for I having so plainly proposed it to the
World, as a Doctrine that came from God,
and so evidently demonstrated it to be so,
that they cannot plead Ignorance or Want of
conviction; their Infidelity, who shall oppose
it, will be without Excuse; and their Rejection
of it, interpreted by God to be a
conscious Resisting and Contemning of me, and
him too. *If I had not come, &c.*

What our Lord supposed would be the
Condition of his Religion, and the Preachers
of

of it then, is too plainly the Case of both this time.

'Tis pretty hard, that after near 1700 Years Prescription, the Title of the Christian Religion to Truth should be call'd into Question. But so it is, Arguments are urged for Natural Religion, in Opposition to any Revelation: The Rise and Progress of the Christian in particular, is ascribed to Policy and Design in some, and to Credulity and a Disposition to hearken to any Impostor in others. The Holy Author of it is treated with those Insolencies and Blasphemies, which it could not but be as uneasy to you to hear, as to me to repeat them. To give only one Instance; his Riding into *Jerusalem*, is impudently represented under the light Expression of * *making his Cavalcade upon his Asinego*.

And these horrible Blasphemies have been not only once impudently printed and publish'd to the World, under the Pompous Titles of *Oracles of Reason* in the Life-time of the Author; but since the Death of that unhappy Man, reprinted with other of his wretched Works, and an Epistle before them, placing the Author in Heaven, and giving his Works the Characters of *Sacred Monuments*; *Truths of too great Importance*

* *Orac. of Reas. p. 165.*

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be slightly run-over, of too great Beauty not
hold our Eyes some time on them. And these
the way are some of the excellent Fruits
that licentious Abuse of the Liberty of the
Press † for which that Author was so zealous
Advocate.

After this Treatment of our Lord, no
sage of us his Ministers can be surprizing:
they have called the Master of the House
Belzebub, what must they of the Household ex-
pect? We cannot wonder at their charging
us with Hypocrisy and Deceit, Self-Interest
and Worldly Designs, and what not.

Nay, so far as all these Reproaches affect us
only, we can, I hope, not only patiently en-
dure, but even rejoice that we are counted
worthy to suffer Shame for the Name of Christ,
to bear his Reproach, and to fill up what is be-
hind of his Sufferings: And, in Obedience to
his Command, and Conformity to his Ex-
ample, forgive and pray for those that thus
despitefully use us; *Father forgive them, I*
wish we could add, *They know not what*
they do.

But, so far as these Contumelies affect our
Master and his Religion, and they are wound-
ed through us; as most certainly an Affront
offer'd to an Ambassador as such, does not

† Just Vindication of Learning, and the Liberty of the Press.

rest in him, but reaches the Prince that gave him his Character; and as certainly they that are endeavouring to bring a Contempt upon the Priest's Office, and render it useless, are aiming at our Religion; for if they can destroy the Priesthood (as some speak their Intentions pretty plainly) the Discipline and Ordinances of Christ cannot be administered; and if our Publick Ordinances were once laid aside, 'twould not be possible long to keep up a Face of Religion. Upon these Views we may be allow'd to be jealous of the Honour of our Master and his Institutions, and shall not surely be thought to carry our Resentments too far, by making that Return to their Insolencies and Blasphemies, which the *Archangel* made to one of old, famous for his *Oracles*, *The Lord rebuke them*; and by opposing to their impotent Attempts, to render our Religion suspected, those irrefragable Arguments for the Truth of it, which must prevail, where-ever Reason is permitted to be Judge.

So far am I from affronting † *Reason*, that *Sovereign Guide*, as 'tis call'd, or from *infringing its Liberty of directing*, even in the Choice of a Religion, that I do very freely acknowledge, that a Religion, which cannot be reasonably

† *Preface to Orac. Reas.*

accounted for, is not fit for a Rational Creature to own, nor worth his keeping.

I speak of a Religion in gross; a Man ought to know upon what Grounds he takes it up, before he professes one; and to be able to give better Reasons for it, than because it is the Religion of the Country wherein he lives, or that wherein he was educated.

He that embraces a Religion without any, or any good Reason, is likely enough to part with it upon as easy Terms.

He that owns one merely because it is profess'd in the Country wherein he lives, must change one as often as he does the other.

He that pleads Education, urges an Argument common to all Religions: And since all cannot be true, an Argument, that may be equally used for all, must needs be bad.

A Man should therefore well examine the Force of those Motives that are offer'd to him, to persuade him to be of this or that Religion, and not give himself up to any, but that which is proved to be the true one, by such Arguments as agree to that, and to no other, and such as will be of Weight with him in all Times and Places, and sufficient to prevail with a prudent and considering Man, to adventure so great a Stake thereupon, as the everlasting Condition of his immortal Soul: And such Arguments for

the Christian Religion, has our Saviour furnished us with in the Words of my Text.

If, says he, I had not come and spoke unto them, (i. e.) if I had not come according to the ancient Predictions, and appear'd publicly in the World as a Prophet sent by God, and preach'd a Doctrine as from him, so pure and holy, that it plainly carry'd his Image and Superscription upon it, *They had not had Sin; (i. e.)* they might have had the Plea of Ignorance; but *now they have no Cloak for their Sin, (i. e.)* no Pretence, no Colour of an Excuse to cover their Incredulity. And,

If I had not done among them the Works which none other Man did, (i. e.) if I had not justify'd my Mission, Authority and Doctrine to be from God, by working such Miracles for the Proof of them, which no Man could do without a Divine Assistance; their Rejecting of me and my Doctrine, might have been more pardonable: *But now they have both seen, and bated both me and my Father; (i. e.)* they have seen him, his Power in those Works which I have wrought in his Name; and their Rejecting my Doctrine, for the Confirmation whereof he so plainly appear'd, is a malicious Opposing not of me only, but of the Father himself.

So that from hence I might take Occasion to insist upon two Arguments for the Proof

of the Christian Religion; one taken from those internal Marks of Divinity which appear in it, the Holiness and Purity of what our Saviour spake or taught; the other from those external Evidences which we have of its Truth, in the miraculous Works which were wrought for the Attestation of it.

But the first of these, though it be an excellent and forcible Argument for our Religion, with unbyass'd, pious, and well-dispos'd Minds; yet it will hardly have its due Weight with such Adversaries as we have to deal with; nay, in Truth, it is rather, I fear, the true Ground of their Opposition to it: for, to apply what one of their great Masters has said of Reason to Religion; *if Religion be against a Man, a Man will be against Religion.*

I shall therefore at this time confine myself to the second Argument, which is taken from those Works which were wrought for the Proof of our Religion; and particularly that signal one, the Raising of the Holy Author of it from the Dead.

In order to the more regular proceeding; I must state the Question with the Deist, and lay down some Demands, so reasonable, that we shall be ashamed to deny them.

The Dispute is not between Natural and reveal'd Religion; for both one and the other

are from God, who cannot differ from himself; but the Question is between us and the Deists, as they call themselves, Whether God has left Men, as to the Way of Worshipping and Serving him, to the Light of Nature only, to those *νοῦναι ἐννοιαί*, those common Notions of Good and Evil, which are naturally implanted in their Hearts? Or whether he has made any farther Discovery of his Will by the Ministry of any that he has sent into the World for that End, and particularly by Jesus Christ?

I assert the latter Part of the Question, and to make way for my Argument *down*,

First, That God can, if he pleases, make known or discover a Religion to Men by an External Revelation.

Natural Religion and Reveal'd Religion are not so properly opposed, but that Natural Religion is a Reveal'd Religion, but it is reveal'd by an Internal Way of Proposal; whereas that which we especially mean by Reveal'd Religion, is discover'd by an External Way of Proposal. Now they that contend that God has discover'd a Religion by an Internal Way of Proposal, cannot deny but that he may, if he will, discover one by an External Way; by raising up, and empowering fit Instruments for that Purpose.

One

One of these does no more imply a Contradiction than the other, nor is more repugnant to any of the Divine Perfections; and God can do whatever implies not a Contradiction.

Secondly, That if it appear that such Testimony has been given to an External Revelation, as none but God could give, such Works wrought and appeal'd to for the Proof of the Truth and Divinity thereof, which could not be effected without a Divine Assistance; this is an undeniable Evidence that God has made such a Revelation. For if God has put forth his Power to attest that a Revelation came from him, either what is so attested is true; or God, who is essential Truth, has given his Testimony and Seal to Lye.

Thirdly, That those who have the clearest and best Evidence, that such Divine Testimony has been given to the Truth and Divinity of an External Revelation, that a thing of that nature is capable of, and such as, supposing it true, they could not have had better; have all the Reason that can be to submit to it; and if they do not, *have no Cloak for their Sin*, no Plea for their Infidelity; for they resist the utmost Conviction that can be had.

These things being premised, I will go on in this Method :

1. I will shew that those Works which we say were wrought for the Proof of the Christian Religion, especially the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead, were such as could not have been affected by any Power less than Divine.

2. I will prove, that we have the best Evidence that such Works were wrought for that Purpose, that the Matter is capable of, and such as we could not have had better, supposing it true.

3. I will enquire what Cloak the Unbeliever has for his Sin, what Plea he can offer, what Excuse he can pretend for his Infidelity. And,

4. I shall conclude with some Practical Application, with regard to the particular Occasion of our Meeting.

1. The Works which we say were wrought for the Proof of the Christian Religion, were such as no Person, unassisted with a Divine Power, could have done : They were, commanding the Winds and Seas, stilling Tempests; casting out Devils, cleansing Lepers, healing the most inveterate Diseases, restoring the Deaf to their Hearing, and giving Sight

ight and Use of Limbs to those who were
born blind and lame, &c. And all these
were done in so many Moments, without
the Application of any, or any competent
Means for the effecting of them, by a bare
Touch, or but speaking a Word; and yet
the Effects were real and lasting; the Blind,
Deaf, and Lame, immediately seeing, hear-
ing, walking, and continuing so to do.

Now by what Power, less than Divine,
could these things have been done?

As for Nature, if these things are within the
Compass of her Working, not beyond the
Laws prescribed her, but such as might be
done by some secret and unknown Power
in her; 'tis very strange that she never ex-
erted that Power before nor since. But I
shall only ask how the Author and first Plan-
ners of the Christian Religion came to be
upon the Secret, at that time privy to that
Design of hers, of putting herself forth in
such an extraordinary Manner then, that they
could exactly know the Minute when, the
Object about which, and the Instance where-
in she would exercise that Power, which till
that time had lain dormant in her; and that
so certainly, that they could confidently ap-
peal thereto for the Truth of what they taught,
and let the Credit of their Doctrine depend
thereupon? Men that have curiously enqui-
red

red into Nature, may, from Observation which they have made upon their own or others Experience, that such and such things have happen'd upon such and such Conjunctions, when they see the like Conjunctions, foretell that probably the same Effects will follow. But if Men shall certainly foreknow that strange things, beyond the ordinary Course of Nature, will happen at such a time, which never happen'd before, and of which therefore they could have no Experience to ground an Observation upon; if the Work itself were not above Nature, yet the Foreknowledge of it must be supernatural, and from God alone. And the Revealing of things of this kind to a Person, whereby he is enabled to appeal to them for the Truth of what he teaches, will as effectually bring in God for a Voucher of his Doctrine, as if the Works themselves had been done by his immediate Assistance.

But whatever may be pretended of others, some at least of those Works, which we say were wrought by the Author for the Proof of our Religion, are such as are confessedly beyond the Power of Nature, or any Created Being.

And those are, his raising of several, and himself at the last, from the Dead. Those that deny all Miracles, own that these would be

the Miracles, if they ever were or should be done,

These things then being granted to be beyond the Reach of any Power less than Infinite, the Evidence of Fact that they have been done, and that for the Attestation of the Truth of the Christian Religion, shall be made out in my next

2. Proposition, and that by the best Proof of this Nature is capable of; I say, the best Proof it is capable of; for all things are not capable of Mathematical or Metaphysical Evidence. Matters of Fact, which happen'd before our Time, or in distant Places from us, are capable of no other than that which we call Moral Proof: But if they are proved by the best Evidence of that sort, they are as well proved in their kind, as Propositions in either of those Sciences which are demonstrated.

Now, as to the Moral Evidence, that the above-mention'd Facts were done for the Proof of the Christian Religion, we have them recorded in a Venerable History, against which none of those Objections can be justly made, which can render the Authority of any History suspected.

For if there be Reason to suspect the Truth of any History, it must be upon the Account of either the Book or the Author.

If

If upon the Account of the Book, it is either because the Book is in the whole spurious, not written by the pretended Author, but the Work of some later Impostor; or else because it is faulty in part, having been interpolated or corrupted,

If upon the Account of the Author, it must be because he had not either sufficient Opportunity of knowing himself the Matters he relates, or Honesty enough to relate truly what he did know; Either he was imposed upon, believing those things to fall out which did not, or else he had a Design to impose upon others.

But where none of these things can be reasonably suspected, where we have Grounds to believe a Book to be genuine, entire and pure, and the Author both knowing and honest, well acquainted himself with what he relates, and without any Design to lead others into Error; in such a Case there can be no Cause, nor Pretence of a Cause, to doubt of the Truth of a History.

Now that the Books wherein these Miracles are recorded, the Books of the New Testament, are genuine, we have certain Information from the very Men, * that knew and conversed with the Writers of them.

* *Clem. Roman. Ignat. Polycarp.*

those that lived in the Time of the Authors, and conversed with them, had certainly Opportunities of knowing whether the Books were genuine or not; and it mightily constrain'd them to enquire nicely, and be well satisfy'd that they were so; and no doubt they were upon Enquiry so satisfy'd, when they asserted the Truth of them, with the utmost Hazard of what was dearest to them in this World, and ventured likewise thereupon their Eternal Salvation in the next. We find these Books transmitted as Authentick to the next Generation, and received as such by them; nay, the very Originals appeal'd to, remaining at the End of the Second Age.

Of the Truth of these Books, they were so unquestionably satisfy'd in the next, that rather than deliver up these Books to their persecutors, they chose to give up themselves to the severest Torments and Deaths.

And from thence we have an uninterrupted Tradition of the Truth and Genuineness of them, continued down to our Times.

And as they are genuine, so that they are pure and uncorrupted; the early dispersing them into distant Places, and translating them into several Languages, will not suffer any

† *Justin M. Irenæus, and the Apologists. Tertull.*

one to doubt: For since, in all the Copies and Translations now extant, there is such perfect Agreement in the main, that they hardly differ in any thing of great Moment how can it be imagined; that so many Men of different Countries and Tongues, living remotely, and having little Commerce with each other; should all conspire together to falsify their Copies, to put such a Cheat upon themselves and their Posterity; as to interpolate those Books, which they believed and asserted to be Divine, and contain the *Words of Eternal Life*, and transmit them so corrupted to Ages to come.

For the Writers of these Books, that they could not but know, whether the Matters which they related were true or false, is certain from the Facts themselves; which being Matters of Sense, they were very competent Judges of them, and which they do not relate as done in Ages past, and Places remote which they do not take upon Trust, nor tell upon Hearsay, but as done in their own Time and Sight.

If therefore they have related that which is false, they must have done it knowing and designedly.

But that they should feign what they wrote, designing to abuse the World, cannot be suspected by any that consider, that they were
honest

best and harmless Men, of unblamable
conversations; that they were mean, illite-
rate Persons, hardly capable of inventing so
coherent a Story: That there was no Ad-
vantage they could propose to themselves
from it; but contrarywise, they exposed
themselves by it to Ignominy and Contempt,
Poverty and Spoiling of their Goods, to
Imprisonments, Tortures and Death.

But let it be supposed, that they had Wick-
edness and Malice enough to design to abuse
the World, and an Interest to serve by so do-
ing, and withall Wit and Skill enough to
contrive such a plausible Fable; yet how
could they ever hope to make it pass upon
the World, when they wrote in the very
place that was the Scene of all those strange
works which they reported, and addressed
themselves to the very Men before whom
they were done, and that whilst they were
fresh in their Memories, appealing to them
for the Truth of them?

Certainly, if these things were Fictions, to
be about to impose them in such a manner
upon Men, must argue those that attempted it
to be plainly distracted and out of their Wits;
either they had too little Sense to invent
these Stories, or too much to hope to make
them believe them to whom they related them:
For Men cannot be deceived in Matters con-
cerning

cerning which Appeal is made to their Senses. Strange Stories of things pretended to be done in Times of Old, or Foreign Countries, may, though false, when confidently reported, pass upon easy People; but Credulity can be so great as to be persuaded by any Confidence, or Impudence rather than Matters of Fact which were not done at all, were done in one's Presence and Sight.

If then what these Men relate were false, since those to whom they directed their Reports could not but know they were so as well as themselves, sure no Folly ever equalled that of the Relators, except haply that of those that could believe them: And yet we find many Thousands believing these Relations, reverencing the Authors of them, embracing the Religion they preached, and for the Proof of which these Miracles were done and related; and for the Sake thereof, forsaking the Gods they had worshipped, renouncing the Religion they had been educated in, sacrificing their Lusts and Vices and not counting their Lives dear to them. So that either there were such Miracles wrought as these Persons related, or this at least must be one, that those Relations should obtain so much Credit in the World.

Having thus asserted the Authority of the History, I beg Leave to consider a little more particularly

particularly some of the Facts recorded in

In this Book then we meet with a long
train of Miracles, Works beyond the Power
of Nature, or any Created Being, wrought
by a Person that professes himself sent by
God to reveal his Mind and Will to the
world, to which Miracles he constantly ap-
peals for the Proof of his Mission and Do-
ctrine. *Believe me for the Works-sake; I
give greater Testimony than that of John; the
Works that I do in my Father's Name bear Wit-
ness of me; and if I by the Finger of God cast
out Devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is
come unto you.*

But in a more especial manner his Resur-
rection is asserted as the most Demonstrative
Proof of his being sent by God.

To raise the Dead, is an uncontroverted
Privilege of the Deity; and certainly and
distinctly to foretell future Contingencies, is
too. Now in the Gospel we read, that
when the Jews came to Christ, twice de-
manding a Sign of him, that he would shew his
Credentials, make some Proof of his Com-
mission and Authority, he tells them once,
*Destroy this Temple, (speaking of the Temple
of his Body) and in three Days I will raise it
up.* And another time, *No other Sign shall
be given but the Sign of the Prophet Jonas.*

H

For

For as Jonas was three Days and Nights in the Belly of the Whale, so the Son of Man shall be three Days and Nights in the Heart of the Earth.

Now here he lays the Credit and Authority of all that he asserted concerning himself, or taught them, upon the falling of a Thing future, and That a Thing impossible to Nature or any Created Being; upon his rising from the Dead the third Day after they should kill him: And as he foretold it fell out. After they that had Crucified him were satisfy'd that he was dead, he laid him in a new Tomb, and, to prevent any Attempts to steal away his Body, he seal'd the Sepulchre, and set a strong Watch to guard it; the third Day the Sepulchre was found empty, the Linnen Cloaths that his Body was wrapt in lying there, but his Body was gone.

Their Pretence, that after all the Prediction they had used, his Disciples came that Night and stole him away while the Watchmen slept, is too idle and contradictory to need a Confutation. What Hopes could the poor scatter'd Disciples have to succeed in such an Attempt; and what End could they propose to serve if they should succeed? What Motive could prevail with them? Look to their dead Master, and a Design to gain Reputation

reputation to his Religion, could never do it: for either they had some Expectation that he would rise from the Dead, grounded upon the Scripture-Type, and Predictions concerning the Messiah, and the Applications which Jesus had made of them to himself; or they had no such Expectations. If they had no such Expectations; if, as the Evangelists tell us, *they knew not the Scriptures, that he was to rise from the Dead*; if they were so far from expecting any such thing, that when he was risen, the Words of those that reported it *seem'd to them as idle Tales*, and they were not without great Difficulty persuaded to believe it; why then should they attempt to steal him away, and make the World believe he was risen?

But if they did expect his Rising again, observing what the Scriptures had foreshewn of the Resurrection of the Messiahs, and what he had promised for himself, as the great proof of his Authority and Religion, that *in three Days he would raise again the Temple of his Body*; then, if after three Days he was not risen, what should move them to try with so much Hazard to themselves, to make Men believe he was risen? Whereas, if he had fail'd them in this, they had all the Reason in the World to look upon him as an impostor, and themselves as cheated by him,

who had avouched himself to be the Messiah, and yet had not answered the Character given by the Prophets of the Messiahs, who had made himself the Antitype of Jonah, who lay three Days and Nights in the Whale's Belly; and declared, that in Conformity to the Type, he would lie three Days and Nights in the Belly of the Earth, and rise again the third; and yet was so far from making this good, that after many three Days, he still lay captivated under the Power of Death. When they were once convinced of this, it had been surely the greatest Madness in the World for them to expose themselves to Dangers and Miseries, to attest so monstrous a Lye, either for the Salvation of such a Deceiver, or of a Religion which such an Impostor was the Author of.

But I need not insist upon this; for the Sepulchre was not only found empty, but he frequently appear'd and shew'd himself alive to several the very Day of his Resurrection, that it might appear that the Circumstance of Time, which he foretold, was fulfilled: And when his Disciples, upon his first Appearance among them, (he shew'd himself three several times to them while they were assembled together) were so frightened, supposing they had seen a Spirit without any real Body, he calls for Men to receive

and eats before them; he appeals to their senses, bids them handle him and feel that he had a true Body, consisting of Flesh and Bone; and, to convince them that 'twas the same Body that suffered, he shews them the Prints of the Nails in his Hands and Feet; and afterwards made *Thomas*, who it seems was resolved to submit to no less Conviction, thrust his Hands into the Wound made by the Spear in his Side; and, to support the Testimony which these should give of his Resurrection, and to put it beyond all Contention, he appear'd to more than five hundred at once, and last of all to *S. Paul*, who appeal'd to the greatest Part of that number, as then living, for the Proof of this, *1 Cor. xv.* So that this Matter, as it is laid in these Books, is so attested, that no former thing in the whole World ever had that Evidence of Fact.

The Sum of what I have said, is this; The Evidence of these Facts is so strong, that whoever can disbelieve them, can never believe any thing that happen'd before his own Time, or out of his own Sight: The Facts are such, that whoever believes they were done, cannot disbelieve that Doctrine Proof of which they were done, without believing that God, who can no more be deceived, has misled Men

into the Belief of a Falshood, in a Matter wherein it is of the greatest Consequence to them not to be mistaken, by the greatest and most irresistible External Evidence that can be had of the Truth of any thing: And consequently those to whom these Facts are thus made out, can have no good Reason to deny or suspend their Assent to that Religion, for the Confirmation whereof these Works were wrought. What Cloak they have for their Infidelity, what Pretences they would cover it with, we shall see in the third and next Particular. And here,

First, 'Tis said that the Christian Religion has not been generally reveal'd, and therefore cannot be necessary to future Happiness because if it were, those who could know it, are out of a Possibility of a future State of Blessedness, which seems inconsistent with God's infinite Goodness, who provides for all his Creatures the Means of attaining that Happiness, whereof their Nature are capable. *

The Force of which Objection depends upon a false Supposition; they take it for granted that we teach, that those who could not have any Knowledge of the Christian

* *Orac. of Reas. P. 198, &c.*

Religion, are out of a Capacity of being
ed. Thus they would have it believ'd that
say, because otherwise they have no
ound for this Argument: But for our
arts, we deny that our Church teaches any
th Doctrine.

We do not determine peremptorily of
the Eternal State of the Heathens: We do
not pretend to judge those that are without;
their own Master they stand or fall.

We say indeed, Infidelity is a Damning
sin; but we mean not a Negative, but a
Affirmative Infidelity, a Want of Faith in a
Subject capable of it.

We say, there is no Salvation but through
the Merits of Jesus Christ; but say not whe-
ther or how far God may extend the Benefit of
those Merits, to such as live according to
the best Light they have, and whose Unhap-
piness and not Fault it is, that they want the
Light of Revelation.

To be sure they shall not be judged by
or condemned for not obeying the Re-
vealed Law; which being not made known,
could not be a Rule to them; but shall be
try'd by the Law written in their Hearts.
So S. Paul expressly says, Rom. ii. 14. *The
Gentiles having not the Law, are a Law to
themselves, which shew the Work of the Law
written in their Hearts; their Conscience also*

bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another in the Day when God shall judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel.

But if we are so charitable to the Gentiles, why should not we judge as favourably of our Modern Deists?

Their Cases are widely different: The former never heard of Christ or his Religion. These have heard of, and yet oppose and revile both. And our Saviour has plainly determined in Favour of the former, rather than these, in my Text; *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had Sin; but now they have no Cloak for their Sin.*

Secondly, It may be objected against the Authority of the Scriptures, that there have several Books gone abroad in the World under the Names of the Sacred Writers, which are discover'd to be Forgeries.

But surely 'tis no new Discovery that there have been such Books, or that they are Forgeries: The Cheats have been long since detected, and the Books rejected by the Christians. But what can be inferred from hence? Any thing to the Prejudice of the Books which the Christians own? Not in Reason: For if another Man should write a Book in the Name of a celebrated Author, or under the Title which his Works bear

and that Book should afterwards appear to be Spurious, 'twould be very hard that this should affect the Credit of that Author's Genuine Works.

I think the Consequence turns the other way; and the Books falsely ascribed to the Apostles, the Counterfeit Gospels and Epistles, prove that there were such Men as the Apostles; that they were Authors, that there were true Gospels and Epistles; for if there had never been such Men, if they had not written, if there had been no true Gospels and Epistles; we should never have heard of spurious Works under their Names; there would have been no such Counterfeit Gospels and Epistles.

Thirdly, It may be said farther to the Prejudice of our Books, that some of those which we do now receive, were for some time question'd by Christians.

But those question'd Books contain'd nothing different from what was contain'd in those that were never doubted of.

And what can be the just Inference from hence; but that Christians were not easy, credulous Persons in these Matters, but examined the Books well, and would be thoroughly convinced of the Truth of them before they would receive them?

But

But to silence this Cavil, a Person whose Authority I suppose will pass with our Deists, who was one of the violentest Enemies to Christianity, and Master of more Wit than his modern Followers, *Julian* the Apostate Emperor I mean, owns those Books to be the Writings of the Evangelists, and of the Apostles *S. Peter*, and *S. Paul*, which the Christians read under their Names. *

Fourthly, It may be objected against the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles, that the World has been much abused with Accounts of false Miracles: Nay, that Christians, they that pretend to be the only Society of Christians, have received many Miracles as strange for Quality as those of Christ's, and with equal Faith; some of which they themselves have since own'd to be false; and from hence it may be argued to the Prejudice of Christ's Miracles, that if the Credulity of some later Ages has been thus imposed upon by cunning and designing Men, why may not the same or like Artifices have prevail'd in the first Christian Times?

But this Objection will be easily answered, by observing these Differences between the Miracles of our Saviour, and the pretended ones of the Church of *Rome*.

* *Cyrl. contr. Julian. p. 327.*

The *Romish* Miracles have either no Witnesses, or such as are made Choice of for their known Weakness or Partiality; none of them was ever attested by any Authors of known Repute; whereas those of Christ were wrought in the Face of the World, and that Knowing and Learned World, that resisted the Conviction to the utmost, but were forced by the Power of it to submit: And of this we have such Assurance, that no Matter of Fact was ever so attested to succeeding Ages.

Again, the *Romish* Miracles were not done as Signs to those that believe not, but to those that already believed; not before Sceptical Infidels or obstinate Hereticks, but before *Profelytes* already made and prepared for the strong Delusion; that had put out their own Eyes, and renounced their own Reason and Senses, and resigned themselves entirely to be governed by those of their designing Leaders; and such indeed might very easily be imposed upon.

But the Case was very different with our Saviour's Miracles, where Men came with their Eyes as wide open as Prejudice and Interest could make them, to examine Facts which they would not have had to be true, and yet could not withstand the Evidence, but were forced to acknowledge the Truth
of

of them: And many of Them that came with these Prejudices, were nevertheless by the Conviction of these Miracles brought over from a Religion they had suck'd in with their Milk, that was supported by the Suffrages of the Wise, and the Power and Countenance of the Great, to a New Religion, laugh'd at by the one, and persecuted by the other.

This was truly the Case of the Christian Religion at its first coming into the World. It appear'd with all the Disadvantages imaginable, was proposed by the meanest and most contemptible Instruments, was opposed and ridiculed by the Learned of the Age, was threatned and most severely persecuted by the Emperors and Potentates.

And what Allurements did this Religion offer, to draw Men through all these Difficulties to it?

Was there Honour or Reputation to be got by owning it? No, alas! Our Saviour told his Disciples, *Ye shall be hated of all Men for my Name sake.* They were call'd a *Sect that is every where spoke against:* They were counted as the *Dung and Off-scouring of the World.*

Did it propose Riches or Wealth? No; *Blessed are the Poor, but woe unto you Rich; sell what thou hast, and give Alms:* And how

hardly

Hardly shall a Rich Man enter into the Kingdom of Heaven?

Did it offer Ease and Pleasures? No; In the World ye shall have Tribulation; ye shall be persecuted and driven from this City to that; brought and accused before Kings and Governors: And whoever kills you, will think he does God Service. Alas! this Religion laid no other Baits to allure Men to it, if it were not true, but Persecution, Poverty, Imprisonment and Death.

The Conditions of Discipleship proposed by our Lord, are; *If any Man will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow me*: He must hate his dear Relations, his dear Possessions, and his dearer Life too.

Now certainly here was nothing in all this that could prepossess Men in favour of this Religion, or dispose them to be easily wrought upon by the Methods used for its Propagation, without a just Enquiry into the Truth and Validity of them; that could make Men despise all the Difficulties that opposed them, and willingly run through all the Dangers that threatned them into it, without being fully satisfy'd that God did really bear witness to it by *Signs and Wonders, and mighty Works*.

In

In short, when the Christian Religion first appear'd in the World, the Teachers of it us'd none of those Methods of Policy, Force or Flattery, which Impostors make use of to inveigle or affright Men into it: Rather all things conspired to discourage and affright them from it. The only Motive was this, that it was the Way now proposed by God to attain Eternal Life; and the great Evidences and Demonstrations of this, were the Miracles wrought and appeal'd to by the Author and first Planters of it, which were openly done in the Face of the Sun, and Sight of Men, who had Liberty to examine them as nicely as they pleased. And it cannot be doubted by any one that considers their Prejudice of Education in a former Religion more agreeable to Flesh and Blood, the Severities of this new one, and the Dangers from without which attended the Embraces of it; but that, as these things made them very curious Enquirers into the Truth of it; so That Truth was very apparent, when so many Thousands of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions, ran thro' Fire and Sword, and Deaths of all kinds, into this New Religion.

How speedy and vast a Progress it made in the Times of the Apostles, their Acts and Epistles to the several Churches founded by them

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Christian Religion.

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hem will inform us: And Profane Authors, Tacitus, Suetonius, and the younger Pliny tell us, how considerable a Figure the Christians made in the World, within less than half a Century of the Apostles Times: But by the End of the next Age they were spread all over the Roman Empire, as Tertullian in his Apology directed to the Roman Magistrates tells them. And though this mighty Progress of it only made the Enemies thereof complain, that the City of Rome was environ'd on all sides with the Enemies of the Gods; that the Christians were spread all over the Empire, that the Provinces were full of them, and that there were Persons among them of the greatest Quality and Dignity; yet they thought, as That farther remarks, to have made this Inference from it; for undoubtedly it is a just one; that a Religion which, notwithstanding all those Disadvantages above-mention'd, drew all the Roman World after it, must needs have something in it Excellent and Divine.

Fifthly, After all that is said, the Deist still thinks himself very prudent and cautious; that he is on the safer side; and if he errs, he errs not like a Fool, but, secundum verbum, after Enquiry; and if he be sincere in his Principles,

ples, he can, when dying, appeal to God, Deus bone, quæsi per omnia.*

I suppose it will be allow'd me, that those who have the greatest Evidence that they are in the Right, and run the least Risque if they should be mistaken, act upon the most rational and prudent Grounds, and are on the safer side. Let us then join Issue here.

The Evidence we have for our Religion is this: We say God himself has given Testimony to it, and we are sure that his Testimony is true. That God has given Testimony to it, by Miracles wrought for the Confirmation of it, we prove by the best Evidence a Matter of this Nature is capable of: We produce a whole Cloud of Witnesses, who relate these Facts upon their own Knowledge, who could have no Interest to serve by prevaricating, who ventur'd their All upon the Truth of them, who seal'd their Testimony with their Blood. And this is convey'd down to us in such a manner, that if it be false, it is not possible for us to be sure that any thing, which we did not see, is true; and also supported with Variety of collateral Proofs, Records and Writings of the Enemies as well as Friends of the Christian

* *Orac. of Reas.* p. 92.

an Religion; so that to disbelieve them, is
Scepticism, but Madness.

Now what Proof does or can the Deist
bring against us? Why, he must protest against
Matter of Fact; he must suppose all our
Scriptures, and all the Ancient Fathers Wri-
tings wherein they are quoted, to be For-
geries, and those of *Jews* and Heathens, who
wrote against them, to be so too: Or
that all these have been corrupted by
the unanimous Consent of all Christians,
among whom they were dispersed over the
World; who all agreed to deliver in their
Books, not any denying so to do, or own-
ing or complaining of it; and received them
as so interpolated; and yet still ventured
their Salvation upon the Truth of them: Or
must suppose that a great Number of ho-
nest and undesigning Men would not only
do so for Lying-Sake, but rather than not im-
pose it upon the World, would die Martyrs
for a Lye; and that Multitudes of Persons of
all Conditions swallow'd these Lyes, either
without Examination, tho' they were Mat-
ters of the highest Importance to them, or
even after that upon Examination they had
found them to be so: And yet so obstinately
believed them, that they staked Body and
Soul, quitted their Estates, Liberties, Lives,
and their Enjoyments in this World, and ven-

turn'd upon them all their Hopes in the new
So that I think the Matter is pretty clear on
the Christians Side as to Point of Evidence.

As to Danger, if the Christian runs any
Hazard, it must be because his Religion is
deficient in something necessary to be believ'd
ed or practis'd in order to Salvation, or
imposes some things upon his Belief or
Practice inconsistent with it.

As to the former, I do assert, that there
are no Doctrines in Natural Religion, relat-
ing to Faith or Practice, to God, our Neigh-
bour, or ourselves, to the Duties we owe
each, or the Obligations we lie under to dis-
charge those Duties, but what are more
clearly explain'd, the Duties enjoin'd in
more extensive Meaning, and enforced by
more powerful Sanctions in the Christian
than in Natural Religion.

As to the other, the Articles of Faith and
Positive Institutions peculiar to Christianity
I do affirm, that we are not obliged to be-
lieve any thing that is unworthy of God
repugnant to any Principle of right Reason
or that can have any ill Influence upon our
Lives; nor are we obliged to do any thing
that tends to the Dishonour of God, to the
withdrawing of our Service from him, or
making us slack in the Performance of our
Duty to him: But contrarywise, the Do-

ctrine

Principles and Institutions of the Christian Religion are all, as I could shew if I had time, calculated for the Uniting of our Souls to God, the Exciting of our Fear and Reverence, the Inflaming of our Love, the stricter tying us to, and quickening us in our Obedience to him. And certainly, Doctrines and Practices not only so innocent, but of so good Tendency, especially when we have such Grounds to believe them proposed and commanded by God, as a prudent and considering Man will judge rational, will, although we could be supposed to be out in this Belief, yet be look'd upon as at least very pardonable Errors by our gracious God.

But if the Deist be mistaken, and That Religion which he rejects, and is the Object of his Laughter and Scorn, should prove true at last; what a miserable Condition must he be in?

I grant, a Religion's condemning all those that do not comply with it, is no sure Argument of the Truth of it; but the Truth of it being supposed, it is a very good Proof of the Danger they are in that reject it.

Now the Proposals of the Gospel are set forth as the utmost Effects and Struggle of the Divine Compassion, the last Tenders of Mercy to Mankind. We are there told, that for those who neglect that great Salvation,

there is no Escape; nothing remains more but fearful Expectation of fiery Indignation: The Tenor of it is, He that believes, shall be saved but he that believes not, shall be damned. Nay, it declares, that the Judgment of those who refuse it, after it has been proposed to them, shall be heavier than if there had never been any such Offer made to them.

And what has the Infidel to plead, by which he can hope to mitigate his Crime or his Punishment? Why, only that he had no other or more Evidence for the Truth of the Gospel's Revelations, than the Matter would bear; that God did not use such irresistible Means for his Conviction, as are not consistent with the Liberty of a free Agent, and would have made his Faith to have been no Vertue. And what then can he expect, but that since he would not be convinced by the great Moral Evidence that was tender'd to him of the Truth of the Doctrines of the Gospel, he should feel a Sensible and Experimental Conviction of the Truth and Reality of the Threats of it?

Fourthly, It now only remains that I shut up all with one Word of Practical Application: If he that does not believe the Gospel has no Cloak for his Infidelity, what Cloak can we that do believe it, but not obey it, have for our Disobedience? *What*

Does it profit, if a Man say he has Faith, and has not Works? will Faith save him? A dead Faith, without any Vital Acts flowing from it? No, our Master has told us, 'tis to no purpose to call him *Lord, Lord*, to give up our Names to him, and profess ourselves his disciples, unless we do the Things which he commands us. And this Command we have very particularly in Charge from him, That *that loves God, loves his Brother also*. Vain that Faith that doth not work by Love, and all that pretended Love to God, that is not attended with a Love to our Brother.

The Christian Institution is singular in the junction of Charity. No other Institution ever understood it in so comprehensive a meaning, both as to the Objects and Exercise of it; ever commanded it so strictly, perswaded so pathetically, or proposed such glorious Rewards to it.

The Objects of Christian Charity are as large as all Mankind, not only Relations and Friends, but Strangers and Enemies.

The Exercise of it is to reach as far as our Brethrens Wants, and our own Abilities will go, even to the *laying down of our Lives* upon some Occasions for them.

The Commands that enjoin it, are most frequent and emphatical in this Chapter, Verse 12. *This is my Commandment*, says our

Lord, that ye love one another; and ver. 17. *These things I command you, that ye love one another; and in Chap. xiii. ver. 34. A new Commandment give I unto you; and This is Love, that we should love one another, as much as we have loved one another; and the Love that we have for one another, shall be the distinguishing Badge of your Profession, by which all Men shall know that you are my Disciples; that you have Love one to another.*

The Considerations by which this is pressed upon us, are most moving, viz. The Infinite Love of Christ to us; who will look upon the Kindness we shew to our poor Brethren as done to himself; the near Relation we stand in to one another, not only as being *made of one Flesh*, but as having been baptized into one Body, and so more strictly ally'd as being Members of the same Mystical Body, which ought to have the same Sympathy and Fellow-feeling with one another, as the Members of the Body Natural have. The Excellency of this Grace in that 'tis preferable to Faith and Hope, *the very Bond of Perfectness, the Fulfilling of the Law*, and that it shall cover a Multitude of Sins.

Lastly, The Eternal Glories of Heaven are promised to the due Performance of it. S. Mat. xxv. where our Saviour and Judge describes the Procedure of the Last Judgment, as if the only thing he should then come

me to enquire into, were our Obedience
Disobedience to this Royal Law.

In short, Charity is so Essential to Chri-
stianity, that an Irrational Man is not a great-
Contradiction than an Uncharitable Chri-
stian.

The first Christians were so sensible of this;
that they would scarce call *ought of the things*
they possess'd their own: They thought their
poor Brethren had as good a Title to what
they could spare, as they themselves had to
the rest of their Estates; and they so ordered
Matters, that those who had a great deal,
and those who had nothing, were like the
Israelites that gathered much or little Man-
na; the former had nothing over, and the lat-
ter had no Lack.

Indeed, there never was any Society of
Christians that did not think they ought to
distinguish themselves from Persons of any
other Denomination, by *abounding in this*
Grace. Even the worst Society, That of Rome,
is not deficient in the Exercise of it towards
the Bodies of those of their own Communion;
tho' 'tis to be feared, the Merit of that Cha-
rity will be over-balanced by their Want of
it towards both the Bodies and Souls of
those that differ from them.

But I need not *take Occasion by the Forward-*
ness of Papists to prove the Sincerity of your

Love; having in this City so many noble Instances of Publick Charities since the Reformation to provoke your Emulation. Some of which when I reflect upon, methinks I see some feint Resemblances, Such as poor imperfect Creatures can make, of the Lord himself *going about doing Good*.

See him expressing his Tenderneſs to little Children, in that pious Care that is taken of Poor Orphans in the Hospital that bears his Name.

See him restoring Use of Limbs to the Lame, Sight to the Blind, healing the Maim'd, and curing all Manner of Diseases, in that Variety of Charitable Cures, that are perform'd in the Hospitals of *S. Bartholomew* and *S. Thomas*.

See him making a Whip of small Cords, and scourging the Transgressors, in those just Corrections that are exercised upon the Vicious in *Bridewell*.

See him restoring the Lunatics to their right Minds, in those excellent Methods that are used with poor distracted Wretches in *Bethlehem*.

But I shall possess you with a juster Notion of these Great Charities by reading to you

The true Report, &c.

You see here at once both noble Examples of Charity to excite your Imitation, and very

very worthy and pressing Occasions for the Exercise of it.

Will you pardon me if I mention one other Kind of Charity? The bare naming of which, I think, be sufficient to recommend it: the Encouragement of all well-disposed Persons; I mean, building Work-Houses, and providing a Stock to set the Poor to Work? I mention this with the more Assurance; because I find it is a Way you are going in, and have already made some Progress in it: And were it carry'd on with Unanimity and Resolution to bring it to Perfection, and managed (as I am confident it will be in this City) with Care and Prudence, and a single Eye to the Publick Good, 'twould certainly turn to a very excellent Account.

'Twould not only be a great Charity to the Poor, to their Souls as well as Bodies, keep them from Begging and Thieving, and put them in an honest Way of getting their Living; but To employ those that are now the Burdens and Pests of the Kingdom, working up our Manufactures, would be Publick Benefaction.

And now, my Brethren, since Charity is a special and eminent a Duty of that Religion which our Lord taught and confirm'd to us; since all his true Followers have ever look'd upon and practis'd it as the distinguishing

guishing Character of their Profession; let us having such glorious Patterns before our Eyes to encourage us, and such and so many Opportunities now put into our Hands of exercising this Grace, make use of these Opportunities, and therein follow those excellent Patterns. Without this, I am sure, how firmly soever we may believe our Religion ourselves, and however strongly we may argue for it with others, 'tis not possible we should offer any thing successfully to the Satisfaction of our own Consciences, or Conviction of other Men's. As to ourselves, if we do believe our Religion, we must believe what it tells us, that all the greatest Qualifications and Performances without this, signify nothing; that even our Faith is dead, and our Hope Presumption: And as to others, 'tis in vain to think to persuade them to embrace a Religion by any thing we can say, when they must judge by what we do, that we ourselves despise and believe it not worth observing.

If we would prevail with others to believe the Truth of our Religion, we must first convince them that we believe it ourselves. But if we can live in the open Neglect of, indeed Defiance to its Precepts, especially such an Eminent one as this; let us talk as we will for it, Men can never believe we are in earnest.

If any one Duty be more frequently and forcibly enjoin'd in our Religion than another, 'tis this of Charity; which, when it proceeds from a right Principle, and is directed to a right End, is the Glory as well as the Duty of a Christian; but if a Man, however otherwise endow'd, cannot *show out of good Conversation his Works with Meekness and Wisdom, that Wisdom that is full of Mercy and good Fruits, all his Boasting and Glorifying upon other Accounts is but a Lying against the Truth.*

We live in an Age wherein our Religion is not only undermined by those that are working in the Dark, but more publickly assaulted by open and avowed Enemies. The *Weapons* wherewith we are to encounter them, are *not Carnal*. That which is more immediately our Post, who are the Ministers of Christ, is to Write, Preach, and argue for our Holy Religion; That which is ours in common with us, is to live for it. And did we all but live with that Strictness of Piety and Purity which it enjoins, and we profess; practising *whatever things are Honest, Chast, Lovely, and of good Report; above all putting on Charity, putting on as the Elect of God, Bowels of Mercies and Kindness; we might yet hope to see it flourish*

rish in spite of all the Power and Malice of its Enemies.

That which very much contributed to the speedy and wide spreading of the Christian Religion at first, notwithstanding the mighty Opposition that was made to it, was the Exemplary Behaviour of the Professors of it, and in particular, that shining Charity which they were so eminent for.

And this will ever be a most certain Method to secure and propagate our Religion; it will procure the Blessing and Protection of God; it will be a Means of convincing Men of the Reality of our Faith in the Rewards of another Life, when they see us, for the Sake of them, so willingly part with the good things of this. It must have a very natural Tendency to dispose those that partake of our Charity, to receive Impressions from our Exhortations; and it must give all that hear of it, an amiable Idea of our Religion, when they find that the Employment of a Christian is like that of our great Master. Our good Works so shining forth with a bright and pure Flame, must induce not only those that feel the Warmth of it, but those also that see the Light, to join with us in Glorifying our Father which is in Heaven.

To whom, &c.

The



*the Spirit of Popery tryed,
whether it be of God.*

SERMON preach'd before the KING
at Whitehall, upon the Fifth of No-
vember, 1699.

I John IV. Ver. I.

*Beloved, believe not every
Spirit, but try the Spirits
whether they be of God.*



That by this Caution, *Believe not
every Spirit, but try the Spirits
whether they be of God*, is meant;
give not up your Faith to the
Doctrine, nor yourselves to
the Conduct of every Teacher
and Guide, that shall pretend to instruct
and govern you, till you have examin-
ed and proved, whether his Commission
and

and Doctrine be of God, is evident from the Reason wherewith the Apostle enforces this Advice in the latter Part of the Verse, *because many false Prophets are gone out into the World.* And truly if this Reason could justify the Pertinency and Usefulness of our Apostle's Exhortation at that time, the Preferring of the same Advice will appear, upon the same Grounds, to be no less seasonable and necessary in this Age, wherein the great Author of Lyes and Divisions has shewed himself such a Master in his Art, so successfully employ'd all his Stratagems and Instruments to corrupt the Faith, and break the Unity of the Church, that not only ancient Heresies are revived and improved, but new ones broached, and the seamless Coat of Christ torn into so many Shreds, his Mystical Body broken into so many Sects and Parties, that it is almost as easy to reconcile, as to number them: And each of the different Parties (all of which cannot be in the right) would engross Truth to themselves, confine it to their own Division, and exclude those that differ from them from any Title to it.

It might be of good Use to bring these several Pretenders to the Test laid down in the Text, to try the Spirits whether they be of God: But to examine them all, would be the Work not of a Piece of an Hour, but of a whole Year. The Time usually allotted

such Exercises as this, will not allow me
try more than one of them; and the Day
oints out which I should pitch on. That
old Monopolizer of Christianity, which un-
ristians all the World besides her own Com-
union; anathematizes, excludes from Hea-
n, and damns to Hell, all that will not
nounce their Reason and Senses, and blind-
submit to her Usurpation; who sticks at
Methods for the extending of her Tyran-
y, whether of Fraud and Treachery, or
olence and Cruelty: Witness that fatal
esign, (fatal in the Event to the Authors
it, but intended so to this Church and
ation) which was on this Day to have been
ut in Execution, the never to be forgotten
owder-Plot: A Plot which, say some of
e Soberer of their own Authors, Posterity
will not believe for the Horror of it. Hor-
or indeed! if there must have been so many
Thousands of Men, Women and Children,
s one of them says it was computed, cut
ff at one Blow, had it taken Effect. A Plot
urely hatch'd in Hell, that Lake of Sulphur,
nd form'd in the dark Parts of the Earth,
nd discover'd by him only to whom *the*
Darkness is no Darkness, and whose *Hand can*
find out those that dig down into Hell. And
o much (though *Faux*, when he was taken,
ry'd out, that the Devil, and not God, was
the

the Discoverer) is own'd by some of the own Party, who have acknowledged the Discovery to have been from God.

To express our grateful Sentiments which miraculous Deliverance, as also of another from the Designs of the same Enemies which we have more lately received on the same Day, and to pay our Just Tribute of Thanks and Praise to the Great God for them is the End of our present Meeting; to which I hope, I shall do Justice; and that my Discourse shall not be impertinent or unsuitable to the Text or Day, if instead of relating the Story, (of which, after so many Annual Returns of this Day, no one can be supposed to be Ignorant or Forgetful) or proving the Truth of the Facts, which is as unnecessary *habemus confitentes reos*, I rather choose to bring that Religion, which by these, and other such ever to be abhorr'd Methods, they restlessly labour to propagate, to the Tryal advised to in the Words I have read.

And if, upon Examination, it appears to be not of God; as,

I. Imposing Doctrines and Practices, that derogate from, and undermine the Great and Fundamental Article of the Christian Religion.

II. A

I. As being in a great measure contrary to the Nature and Design of the Christian Religion.

II. As having bid very fair for the Weakning those Grounds and Motives of Credibility, whereby the Divinity of the Christian Religion was asserted, and it recommended to the World. And,

V. As supporting and spreading itself by Methods directly opposite to those by which the Christian Religion was propagated, and inconsistent to the Dictates of Morality and Nature.

I suppose I may, with good Reason, endeavour in my Application to excite in you,

1. A due Aversion to, and just Abhorrence of that Religion.

2. Gratitude to God, who has so often discovered and defeated the Designs of our Adversaries, and rendered their Attempts for introducing and establishing that Religion among us hitherto unsuccessful. And,

3. A Willingness and Readiness to comply with those Means which may most effectually secure us against them for the future.

I am then to try the Religion taught and professed in the Church of Rome, whether

it be of God; and it will appear not to be so, for these Reasons:

1. Because it imposes Doctrines and Practices, that derogate from, and undermine the great Fundamental Article of the Christian Religion; which is this, *that Jesus is the Christ*. This our Apostle does in several Places of his Writings make the distinguishing Mark to try the Spirits by, by confessing of which they would appear to be, of God, and by denying it, of Antichrist. *Whoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*, cap. 5. ver. 1. But cap. 2. ver. 22. *Who is a Liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist, denying the Father and the Son*. And in the Verses immediately following my Text: *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every Spirit that confesses Jesus that is come in the Flesh to be the Christ, is of God. And every Spirit that confesses not Jesus that is come in the Flesh, to be the Christ, is not of God, but is that Spirit of Antichrist*.

So I construe that Proposition, *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα*, making the Predicate to refer to his Offices as the *Messias*, and not to his Incarnation, which is supposed in the Subject. And this Interpretation is not only agreeable to the Original, but to many parallel Places, where S. John expressly makes

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he Predicate *the Christ*, and to the general
sense of Commentators upon this Place.

Now it's known that *Christ* signifies Anointed, and that *Jesus* is so called with relation to his Offices.

The Ceremony of Anointing with Material Oil has been anciently very usual in the designation of Persons to the Offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. And our Lord Jesus being to take upon him those three great Offices: (For *Moses* foretold of him, *A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up*, Deut. viii. 16. And the Psalmist, *Thou art a Priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek*, Psal. x. 4. and *I have set my King upon my Hill of Sion*, Psal. ii. 6.) was Anointed hereto with the Holy Ghost, and with Power; and, for that Reason, is called *The Christ*; *The Anointed*.

By vertue of his First, his Prophetical Office, he was to reveal to us, and instruct us in the whole Will of his Father: So *Moses* predicted of him, in the fore-cited Place; *He shall be like unto me, and him shall ye hear in all things*. And we read in Heb. iii. 2. that *he was faithful, as Moses was faithful in all his House*. And he himself tells his Father, John xvii. that *he had finished the Work he gave him to do, had manifested his Name to Men*; and 6, and in the 8th Verse; *The Words*

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which thou gavest me, I have given them, and they have received them.

By vertue of his Second, his Priestly Office, he was to offer Sacrifice, and intercede for us: The former of which he did upon the Cross; when, as the Apostle in *Heb. ix.* 14. says, *He offer'd himself through the Eternal Spirit without Spot to God: And that Offering* he tells us was to be but once made, in several Places of that and the following Chapter, and gives Reasons for it; First, because it could not be oftner made; for *then he must often have suffered*, Chap. ix. 26. And, Secondly, because it was needless to be repeated for he had by *that one Offering perfected forever them that were sanctified*, Chap. x. 14.

As to the other Part of his Priestly Office, that of interceding for us, the same holy Pen-man tells us, Chap. vii. 25. that *he ever lives to make Intercession for us.* And Rom. viii. 24. *Christ is at the Right Hand of God, and maketh Intercession for us; and there is but one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. ii. 5.

By vertue of his Third, his Kingly Office, he was to rule and govern his Church as Head thereof, to prescribe and give Laws to her. So S. Paul, Eph. v. 23, 24. *Christ is the Head of the Church, and the Church is subject unto Christ.* And Col. i. 18. *He is the Head of the*

Bo

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Body the Church, that in all things he might have the Pre-eminence. And S. James tells us, in his fourth Chapter, that he is that one Law-giver who is able to save and to destroy.

We have now seen why Jesus is called the Christ, or the Anointed, and what he does in vertue of those Offices he was Anointed to. Let us then examine how the Doctrines and Practices imposed by the Church of Rome comport with this Account which the Scriptures give of Christ and his Offices.

And here it is obvious, at the first View, that his first, his Prophetical Office, by which he was to reveal to us the whole Will of God, is struck at by those Doctrines of theirs, which assert, that the Holy Scriptures, in which he has discovered that Will, are not a perfect Rule of Faith; that the Sense of them is not clear and perspicuous, but dark and uncertain; that they are like a Nose of Wax, or Leaden Rule, liable to be turn'd and bent any way, and therefore are to be pieced out with the Addition of Traditions, and not to be read or received without the Expositions of the Church: For what kind of a Prophet or Teacher is that, who hath neither reveal'd to us all that it was necessary for us to know, nor clearly explain'd what he has reveal'd?

And as to his Second, his Priestly Office, by which he was to sacrifice and intercede

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for us, how is that affronted by their frequent Sacrifices of the Mass, which they assert to be true, proper, propitiatory Sacifices, for the Sins and Wants of the Dead, and of the Living; and by those Multitudes of Intercessors, the Virgin *Mary*, and other Saints, whom they join with, or, as one would be tempted by their Practice to judge, prefer before him? Which must necessarily argue that he has neither fully satisfied, nor does effectually intercede for us; for if he had completely satisfied, or did sufficiently intercede, what need of other Sacrifices, or other Intercessors, to be added to him? But if he has not fully satisfied, nor does effectually intercede, what sort of a Priest or Mediator will they make of him?

Touching his Third, his Kingly Office, by which he was to rule his Church, as Head thereof, and to give Laws to her; we know who he is that assumes to himself the Title of Head of his Church; and who they are that have pretended to a Power of dispensing with his Laws, their own Council of *Constance* will inform us; which tho' it freely confesses that our Saviour and King instituted the Sacrament in both Kinds, has yet, with a *non obstante* to the Institution, declared it should be given to the Laity but in one. And then, since they have in all these Instan-

ces given too plain Proof that they believe our Lord Jesus has not sufficiently discharged those Offices which belong to the Christ, they must not blame me, but S. John, if I conclude that their Spirit, their Religion, is not of God; for it is his Assertion, *That every Spirit that confesses not that Jesus is the Christ, is not of God.*

II. The Religion taught and professed in the Church of *Rome* is in a great measure contrary to the Nature and Design of the Christian Religion. As for the Nature of the Christian Religion, it was manly, spiritual, plain, not made up of those *Rudiments* and *beggarly Elements*, by which, as by a School-Master, the Jew, being but a Child, was to be tutor'd and led to Christ; not cloathed with that Multitude of outward Observances, nor adorn'd with that gaudy Pageantry and Shew, with which the *Mosaical* Dispensation was. But now let any one look into the Church of *Rome*, view the Multiplicity of Ceremonies and Shadows, the Variety of Gestures, their frequent Crosses, Fumings, Sprinklings, &c. In a word, how their Religion is almost wholly made of Shew and Pageantry; and let him tell me whether the outward Circumstances have not eaten up the inward Substance, and whether the Complaint may not justly be apply'd to them,

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that the Yoke of Jewish Ceremonies was more tolerable than theirs?

And then for the Design of the Christian Religion, which was to advance Vertue and Piety, to make Men truly good, and to lead them to Happiness by the Paths of real and sincere Holiness; how well the Tendency of that Religion answers those Ends, we need look no farther to be informed, than into their Doctrines of Penance, Indulgences, Purgatory, &c. which must necessarily encourage Men to be wicked: For why should a Man fear to indulge himself in all manner of sinful Enjoyments, when he has no more to do to obtain an Absolution, than to confess himself to a Priest, and be sorry that he has exposed himself to Sufferings? At worst, it is but giving some of his Money for his Transgression, and some of the Product of his Estate for the Sin of his Soul; And why should a Man doubt to deferr his Repentance and Amendment in present, as long as he has Hopes of an After-Game in Purgatory? And then let any judge whether a Religion that abounds with such ungodly Doctrines can be of God, can lay any Claim to that Character which S. Paul gives the Christian Religion in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, where he calls it a *Mystery of Godliness*; and whether it has not a juster Title

that other which he gives the corrupt
strines of *Antichrist*, in his second Epistle
to the *Thessalonians*, where he terms them a
Mystery of Iniquity.

II. The Church of *Rome* has bid very fair
to weaken those Grounds or Motives
of Credibility, by which the Christian Reli-
gion was attested and recommended to the
world. The Chief of those Grounds or Mo-
tives of Credibility, were the Miracles which
Christ and his Apostles wrought; by these
it was, as *S. Peter* speaks, *Acts ii.* ἀπὸ τῶν
ἐν ἀποδείξει, pointed out, declared by
him to be the Christ; they were the Creden-
tials he brought from Heaven. This is plain
from his own frequent urging of them to
win Faith in his Hearers; *Believe me for
the Works sake*; and, *I have greater Testimony
than that of John; the Works I do, bear Wit-
ness of me*; from the Effects they had upon
many that became his Converts, who seeing
the Works that *Jesus* did, believed on him;
and from the Testimony of his very Enemies,
who when they saw how his Miracles wrought
upon the People, cried, *If we let him alone,*
he will not stop something to hinder or discredit these
Works of his, all Men will believe on him; and
therefore they endeavour'd to possess the Peo-
ple that he did them by the Assistance of *Beel-
zebub, the Prince of Devils*. So that it is clear,
the

the Miracles which Christ wrought, were the main Method which he used, to assert the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine, and to gain Profelytes to his Religion.

And 'tis no less clear, that nothing tends more to blast the Reputation, or weaken the Authority of these Miracles, than a Society of Christians receiving with these, Multitudes of other Miracles, which are false or at best suspected.

Now to make good the Fact in this Charge against the Church of Rome, I appeal only to those little *pia Fraudes*, which, if we will believe Eye-witnesses, are to this day made use of to amuse the Ignorant, and impose upon the Credulous; but to those strange Miracles which have been seriously urged to establish or justify some of their Doctrine and Worship, as Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, Worship of Images, and Relicks, and solemnly own'd in their Publick Services, few of which are so attested as to gain Credit from any unbiass'd and thinking Man, and of some they themselves have been ashamed. 'Tis easy to see what Advantage the Romanist has hereby given the Deist, who, as an Argument *ad hominem* he has furnish'd him with. Indeed a Protestant may fairly and truly reply to it, that there is no just Arguing from the Falseness of these Romanist

es against the Truth of the Christian, as I
ld easily shew, had I Time, and were it
present Business; but here is too plain
plausible a *Pretence* given to the Enemies
our Holy Religion, to be over-looked or
lected by them. And however we may
Charity believe that Church did not de-
it may be not foresee, the Consequen-
of such a Conduct; yet, since she has
ntually contributed to the Weakening of
Force of the Christian Miracles, and that
pretending false ones of her own, she has
ne too near to another Character of Anti-
rist, whose Coming was foretold to be
er the *Working of Satan, with all Power,*
and Signs, and Lying Wonders.

IV. *Lastly,* The Religion of the Church of
me is supported and spread by the Me-
ods quite opposite to those by which the
ristian Religion was propagated, and the
states of Morality and Nature. The Me-
ods by which the Christian Religion was
propagated, were, like the Author of it, meek
and gentle, charitable and loving: The first
anters of it watered it with no other
ood but their own: The Gospel had no
nsuming Heats, but kindly cherishing
armths: The Preachers of it did not make
onverts with Sword and Pistol, but by con-
sive Arguments, and moving Persuasions;
they

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they did not enlighten Men's Understanding with Fire and Faggot, but with bright and evident Reason. Our Lord severely rebuked those Disciples, who out of Zeal to the Master, whom the *Samaritans* would not receive, would, after the Example of *Elijah*, have called for Fire from Heaven upon them, with, *Ye know not what Spirit ye are of; is it of mine, not of the Gospel Temper?* What Spirits then are they of, that fetch Fire from Heaven, but Hell; to destroy not *Samaritans*, but Christians; and that not for refusing to receive Christ, but his aspiring to be an Adversary, that is rivalling and justling him out of his Throne; who being of a much more furious Spirit than *Elijah*, would have sent the King, Lords, and whole Representative Body of this Nation, as he went in his fiery Chariot, but not to Heaven, but, they must believe of them, being Hereticks to Hell; who, for the Propagation of the Religion, can put a Corban upon the most sacred Duties Men owe to their several Relations, disturb Societies, unhinge Governments, ruin Families and Kingdoms, form hellish Plots, set up merciless Inquisition, encourage bloody Massacres, make Conquests by Plunders, Rapes, Prisons, Gallies, Gallies, Gallies, and unheard-of Torments, to which Death would be preferable. Blessed Jesus

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Thou meek, gentle Lamb of God! Thou
didst never *strike nor cry*, but wert all
Love and Compassion, even to thy very Ene-
mies; dost thou own these Proceedings, or
these wretched Murderers of thy Saints and
Servants, who have so dipped thy Coat in
Blood, not of wild Beasts, but thy dear
Martyrs, that it can scarcely be known to be
Joseph's Coat? No, surely they have a nearer
Relation to the Woman described in the
fifth Chap. of *Revel.* who was *array'd in*
Purple and Scarlet Colour; whose Garments
were tinged with the Gore, and who was
walk with the Blood of the Saints, and with
the Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus.
But it is time to divert from this ungrate-
ful, though necessary Task, to take my Leave
of these Persons, and apply myself to you.
From the Particulars which I have very
briefly touch'd upon, Time not permitting
me to enlarge, it does but too plainly ap-
pear, that the Religion of the Church of
Rome cannot bear the Tryal of the Text,
that it is not of God.

By way of Inference then.

1. What a just Aversion should this give
us to it, and at what a Distance should it
keep us from it? Can we without Resent-
ment, behold that Church with bold and
glaring Doctrines, affronting our Blessed Mes-
sias,

fiar, and reflecting upon him, as not having made good that Character, by sufficiently discharging the Offices belonging to it, as observed in the first Particular?

Can we, without Resentment, behold his changing the Substance of the Religion taught, into Shadows, and contradicting the Designs of it, exposing the Holy Author of it, as if he were a Saviour to save Men and not from their Sins, by giving Men great Encouragement to indulge themselves in all loose Conversation, as we observed in the second Particular?

Can we, without Resentment, behold his shaking the Grounds upon which he asserted the Divinity of it, and furnishing the Enemies of it with Arguments against it, as observed in the third Particular?

Can we, without Resentment, behold his persecuting, banishing, tormenting, killing our Brethren, as in the fourth Particular?

How long, Lord, holy and true, dost thou avenge the Blood of thy Saints?

But let not our Resentments carry us to take any Revenge ourselves, to any of those Practices which we so justly condemn in them: God forbid that any of their Provocations, even their late base and notorious Misrepresentations of their Treatment in Protestant Countries, should ever prevail

with

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h us to change our Christian Conduct
wards them; or that any of them should
fer in Person or Estate, meerly upon the
count of their Religion.

No; may we rather be in the State of our
ffering Brethren, than in the Condition of
ir Persecutors: We are assured, that *bles-*
are they that are persecuted for Righteous-
s Sake; but read of no Blessing for those
e persecute.

Let us *overcome their Evil with Good*, and,
we have Opportunity, return to those of
t Religion all kind and Christian Offices,
their Persecutions and despitiful Usage
those of ours; and for their Anathema's
d Curses, Blessings and Prayers to our
ereiful God, That he would *bring into the*
ay of Truth, all such as have erred and are
ceived: That to those of them that see not
e Errors and Dangers they are in, he would
uchsafe Light to discover them to them;
d to those that are sensible of them, the
onesty and Courage to acknowledge their
onviction, and come out of that Com-
union.

Yet sure it is no Breach of Charity to be
pon the Defensive, to guard ourselves a-
inst their Attempts; for the Civil Power
o check the Boldness of their numerous
riests in this Town, and restrain them from
that

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that Liberty they take, to invade in many Instances our Ministers Office; and on all Occasions to attempt the perverting of the People; or for us, who minister in Holy Things, to arm our Hearers against their Seduction.

And no other Weapon do we desire, we need we to put into their Hands, than the *Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*, which, if rightly applied, will make them Proof against all their Assaults; for since by that Word it appears, that their Religion is not of God, what Methods of Allurement or Terror can be of Force to draw or drive those to it, who make that Word their Rule?

What Allurement can be presented, that that Question of our Saviour, *Matt. xi. 16* will not answer, *What shall a Man be profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?*

What Terrors and Affrightments can be offered, that his Promise in the sixth of this Gospel, ver. 29. will not support a Man under? *Every one that hath forsaken Houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for my Name's Sake, shall receive an Hundred-fold, and inherit everlasting Life.*

I shall conclude this Head with the Words of a *Romish* Writer in the late Reign; which, though used by him in Ridicule, shall be applied by me in very good Earnest; *That the Martyrs recorded by Fox, that pass'd the fiery trial in Q. Mary's Days* (and I will add all others that shall suffer the like upon the same Account) *had, and shall have, a glorious reward on't; and I doubt not, as he continues, that the Crowns of Glory which attend such in Heaven, are not inferior to those which they enjoy'd who suffered under Decius and Dioclesian.*

2. What Obligations of Gratitude do we owe under to our most gracious God, for not only raising up our Holy Reformers, who got off that insupportable Yoke, which neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear, rescued this Church from the Tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and purged it from the Idolatry and Superstition of that Church; but also for preserving it hitherto from being again corrupted, and brought into Bondage; defending the House swept and garnished, notwithstanding all his Attempts, from the Return of the Evil Spirit.

Whoever reflects upon the Strength and Riches of the Church of Rome, the Number of her Members, her Interest with, or rather Authority over too many of the Princes

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of Christendom, whom she has made drunk with the Wine of her Fornication, and bewitch'd with her Philters, to lay their Heads in her Lap, and give up their Power to her ;

How her Principles will give her Leave to do any Evil, that so great a Good may come of it, as extending her Tyranny, and bringing Heretical Nations into Subjection to her ;

How she truly looks upon this Church to be the greatest Obstacle in her way, that hinders her extirpating the *Northern Heresy* ;

How often , being thus provided with Power and Principle, and strong Inclination to destroy this Church, she has attempted every Reign since the Reformation :

Whoever reflects upon all this, and adds that we have not always been so strictly upon our Guard against her as we ought to have been, but have always had a treacherous Party within us, ready to betray us to her, must acknowledge it to be of the *Lord's Mercy*, that we have not been long since consumed by them ; and that, *If the Lord himself had not been on our side, when Men conspired and rose up against us, they had swallowed us up quick, when they were so wrathfully displeased at us.* And how ought we then

*Ad, Praised be the Lord, who has not given us
er as a Prey unto their Teeth?*

How should we say of this Day in particular, *That this is the Day which the Lord
th made, we will rejoice and be glad in it?*

How memorable ought it to be to us? as I
ope it will be to our latest Posterity, on
which God has twice appeared so wonder-
fully for us; once in the timely and strange
discovery of the Powder Plot in King *James
the First's* Time; and again, in that great
deliverance from the no less dangerous De-
signs of the same Enemies in the Reign of
King *James the Second*, which I must date
from this Day, on which the happy Instru-
ment of it landed in this Kingdom; of
which Deliverance I would not desire to raise
any one's grateful Sense higher, than in Pro-
portion to those Apprehensions of our Dan-
ger; which, however some are willing to for-
get now, every thinking Man had then.

Adored be the Majesty of Heaven, who
has so often commanded Deliverance for us,
thwarted the Designs and Attempts of our En-
emies, that had *evil Will to our Sion*, and not
let suffer'd them *to devour Jacob, or lay waste
his Dwelling-place.*

3. How ready and willing should we be
to comply with, and pursue these Methods,
which will effectually secure us against their

Attempts for the future? There is a remarkable Prophecy in the MSS: of a great Antiquary of our own, That *Popery should decay about the Year 1500, and be restored about 1700, and that most likely by means of our Divisions, which threaten the Reformation, &c.*

What Credit soever this Prediction may deserve, as to the Thing it foretells, the Restitution of Popery, and the Time it prefixes for it; yet the Methods by which it says it will most likely be brought about, are so reasonable and probable, that I think, without pretending to the Spirit of Prophecy, a Man may venture to say, that if ever Popery (humanly speaking) comes in upon us, it must be at those Breaches which we ourselves make.

'Tis known who they are that first caus'd, and are still fomenting our unhappy Divisions; and sure we have been long enough Tools in their Hands for the working their Ends, and our own Ruin.

Whoever looks into *Campanella's* Treatise of the *Spanish* Monarchy, the Scheme he has there drawn for the Subjecting of this Nation and Church to the Power of *Spain*, and Tyranny of *Rome*, will find that the Methods he proposes are the Embroiling of *Scotland*, the Dividing of *England*, and the Instigating the Bishops and *Calvinists*, as he

calls

ills them, against one another; and whoever compares this Project with the Practices of Rome, in relation to us, which our Chronicles or Memories may inform us of, will be satisfied that the latter have been an excellent Comment upon the former.

But this Maxim, *Divide & Impera*, they might have learned from the old Romans: would to God we could learn from them the Principle too, which Nature taught them, and Revelation has more forcibly recommended to us, that of a Publick Spirit, and hearty Concern for the Publick Welfare, which would beat down and triumph over all little private Interests, and private Piques, and dispose and engage us to that Peace and Union, both Civil and Ecclesiastical, which would be under God our securest Guard against all the Designs and Attacks of our enemies.

As to the former; would we lay aside our Passions for a while, and suffer our cooler Reason to advise, it would tell us, That a *Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation*; that every Particular must suffer by the publick Destruction.

That in our Case 'tis evident to a Demonstration, that if ever our Enemies prevail over us, there is no Quarter to be expected by any; that even those who shall have ser-

ved them most faithfully, by being unfaithful to their Country, cannot look for better Treatment than what they will have highly deserved.

That it is the Height of Phrensy and Madness, for the gratifying an angry, or serving a covetous Passion; for the reaking our Spleen against any we dislike at the Helm, or for the promoting a private mistaken Interest of our own, to contribute to the sinking of the Vessel on which we ourselves are embarked and must with it go down to the Bottom.

And as to the other, Union in Religious Affairs; I would, in the Spirit of Meekness desire such as scruple fixed and constant Communion with our Church, for a time calmly to lay aside their Prejudices, and suppose that it is possible for them to have been mistaken, or been misled; and therefore to resolve to examine Matters carefully themselves, not to take things upon Trust or think it a sufficient Reason for their Separation from us, that they have been educated another way.

Let them impartially consider, Whether the Established Church be not the only Communion in which there is any Likelihood, indeed Possibility, for us generally to unite against the Common Enemy: Whether did not appear to be the only Bulwark against

Popery in the late Times of Danger and
Tyranny: Whether her Members did not brave-
ly defend the Protestant Cause, when some
had reflected upon them, as Popishly
affected, did not venture to appear publicly
in Vindication of it: Whether they did not
boldly oppose the Methods that were then
used to introduce Popery, while the others
did too easily comply with them.
Let them consider, Whether there be any
Dangers they can run by joining with this
Church, which can balance that apparent
Danger, which the whole Protestant Interest is
run by their Division from her.
Let them examine her as nicely as they
can; let them bring her to the Test, she
refuses not, she has no Reason to be afraid of
it: she can bear the Test of the Text: Let
them try whether she be of God, or not:
Let them examine her by his Word, and see
if she wants any thing to make her a true
Church, or abounds with any thing that
may make her a corrupt one: Let them try
if she has not Bishops and Pastors rightly
commission'd for their respective Offices; if
the whole Doctrine of Christianity be not
profess'd and taught in her; if the Sacra-
ments of Christ's Institution be not duly ad-
ministr'd and received; and if she have not
Publick Worship, for us to offer up our

joint Homage and Prayers to God in, agreeable to the Scriptures.

Let them try whether she suffers those that minister in Holy Things to be *Masters of Mens Faith* and Consciences, or to exercise any Superiority more than *the Holy Ghost who has made them Overseers*, has committed to them; whether she allows them to deprive their Flocks of the sincere Milk of the Word, and to feed them with Lying Legends instead of it; whether she does not require them to *preach the Gospel, to be instant in Season, and out of Season, and to do the Work of Evangelists, that they may make full Proof of their Ministry.*

Let them try whether she corrupts her Faith by receiving humane Traditions into it, or Articles destructive of true Piety; whether she teaches any Doctrines that may encourage Men to sin, in hopes of Pardon upon easy Terms, or to defer their Repentance in present, in Prospect of any After Game, or any but such as lay the most forcible Obligations upon all to *live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present World.*

Let them try whether she adds to, or diminishes from Christ's Institutions; whether she makes any thing to be a Sacrament which he has not made so, or mutilates and halves any that he has.

The Spirit of Popery try'd. 153

Let them try whether she veils her Worship in a strange Tongue, which the Ignorant cannot say *Amen* to; whether she choaks with Ceremony and Shew, or makes it consist in external frivolous Observances, and not in weighty substantial Acts of Devotion.

Let them try whether she divides her Service betwixt God and the Creature, and does not confine it to him alone to whom it is due.

In short, let them try whether there be any Term of Communion which she imposes upon her Members, either as to Belief or Practice, which can be proved to be sinful by the Scriptures; and if they can find nothing enjoined by her which can make it a Sin to communicate with her, let them examine whether it be not a Sin to divide from her.

These Things let them examine with that Impartiality and Sincerity, that becomes Men that are truly conscientious and afraid of Offending God; (they that are such, will be equally fearful of sinning on one hand as on the other) and then we may hope that we may go up together to the House of God, and with one Heart, and one Mouth, glorify him in the great Congregation.

But

154 *The Spirit of Popery try'd.*

But after all, if any cannot satisfy all their Scruples, at least let them unite as far as they can; *whereunto they have attained, let them walk by the same Rule with us, and mind the same things*; and for those Particulars wherein they shall be differently minded, let them maintain a Spirit of Christian Charity towards us, not censuring us, not endeavouring to possess others with their Scruples, nor to harden themselves in them, but disposing themselves to receive and submit to a Conviction when it shall be offered; and may God, in his due time, *reveal even those things unto them.*

I am sure this which I have been now pressing upon them, is no more than what the Protestant Interest, not only in this Kingdom, but all over *Europe*, calls for from them.

As for us who have the Happiness to be Members of this Church, let us walk inoffensively and charitably *towards those that are yet without*, pitying and praying for them, bearing with, condescending as far as we may to their Infirmities, and *endeavouring to restore them in the Spirit of Meekness.*

Let all Bitterness, and Clamour, and Envy speaking, be far from us: Let us labour to work upon their Affections by all Instances of Love and Kindness, and upon their Understandings by good Reason and Argument.

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Let all of us consider that we are Brethren, have one God for our Father, own one Lord Jesus Christ, profess the same Reformed Religion as to Substance: Why then should Circumstances hinder us, but that we unite together for our common Defence against our common Enemies?

But if we would effectually secure ourselves against them, we must further engage God on our side: He has frequently delivered, and hitherto preserved us from them: but how should we expect he should go on to do so, unless we live like a People saved by the Lord, and in some measure answer the Ends for which he has spared us?

He has wonderfully secured to us a Reformed Church and Religion; but surely he thereby calls upon us to adorn that Holy Religion with reformed Lives: A Religion free from those Corruptions in Doctrine and Worship which that of *Rome* labours under; but certainly he with good Reason expects that we also should be free from their Corruptions in Life and Manners: A Church pure in all her Administrations; but sure at the same time he requires us to be *pure and holy in all manner of Conversation.*

Labour we then after Peace and Holiness, after Union with one another, by Love and Charity,

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Charity, and with our God, by Repentance and Newness of Life.

Let there be no other Strife among us, but who shall be most zealous in promoting the Glory of God, and the Publick Good: Let us consider one another to provoke unto Love, and unto good Works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, but endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.

And may the God of Patience and Consolation grant us to be like minded, according to Christ Jesus; may his Peace rule in our Hearts, conquering and subduing all Malice and Envy, all Prejudice and Partiality, all private Interest and corrupt Designs, and whatever may hinder us from godly Union and Concord; inclining us to be kind and tender-hearted one towards another, and disposing us to lay aside all Disputes among ourselves about lesser Matters, and to contend earnestly for the Faith that was once delivered to the Saints.

If thus our Jerusalem were as a City that is at Unity in itself, if the Tribes went up together to worship to the House of the Lord; if we heartily join'd in praying and labouring for its Peace; if there were among us a Spirit of Reformation, of Sincerity and Honesty, of true Holiness, and the Fear of the Lord, we might hope to invite him to

dwell

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well among us, and to rejoice over us, to do good.

We might then reasonably expect that he will go on to defend us from the Destruction that wasteth at Noon-day, and from the Evil that walketh in Darkness; from all the open attempts and secret Plots of our Enemies; that he will continue to us the Blessings of that great Deliverance, and preserve that sacred Life in which they are so much concern'd; that he will bless him, and us in him, with a long and prosperous Reign over us, till he shall have so establish'd the Thing he hath wrought for us by him, that the Happiness of our present excellent Constitution in Church and State may be transmitted to our Childrens Children, and all the Generations that are yet for to come.



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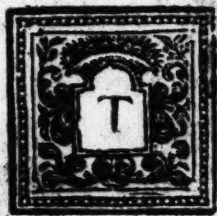


*The Wisdom of considering our
Latter End.*

A SERMON Preach'd before the
QUEEN at S. James's, Feb. 14. 1720
being the first Sunday in Lent.

Deut. XXXII. Ver. 29.

*O that they were wise, that
they understood this, that
they would consider their
latter End.*



These Words are a Pathetical Word
of Moses, on the Behalf of the
People of Israel: I shall beg Leave
to apply them at present to our
selves, not in our Political, but
in our Personal Capacities; not
as a Nation or Body of Men, but as particu-
lar Persons: Tho' if I can be so happy as to
persuade

suade any one so to *consider his own latter*
End, as to be *wise* for himself, it must like-
wise make him *wise* for the Publick too.

The Thing wished for in the Text is
Wisdom, and the Method of obtaining that
Wisdom is Consideration, two very suitable
Subjects for our Meditations at this Season:
The most proper Employment on Days of
Fasting and Abstinence is this Consideration;
And the great End which ought to be served
by our Retirements from the World, Fast-
ings, Self-denials, and all other Spiritual
Exercises, is the obtaining that Wisdom.

In speaking to the Words, I shall endea-
vour to shew,

I. What it is for a Man to *consider his latter*
End.

II. What wise Practices would be the Ef-
fects of such Consideration.

I. What it is for a Man to *consider his latter*
End.

By the latter End of a particular Person, I
understand the same that *Balaam* does in his
Will, which is recorded by the Author of
this Book, in the xxiii of *Numb.* ver 10. *Let*
me, says he, *die the Death of the Righteous,*
and let my last End be like his; where it is
plain, by his *last End*, he means the Time of
his Death, which *Solomon* in the viiith of *Eccles.*
ver. 2. calls *the End of all Men.* And so in-
deed

deed it is as to all the Concerns of Life, and Opportunities of providing another: It puts an End to all the Projects and Designs, the Labours and Tolls, and Cares and Anxieties of the Men of this World for the obtaining or securing the good Things of it, and to the Satisfaction they take in the enjoying or beholding those they have gotten; For as the Wise Man says of the Dead, *Eccles. ix. 6. Their Love* (i. e.) *towards these Things, and their Hatred and Enmity* (i. e.) *towards those that have been more successful in their Pursuits after, and have a larger Share of them, are now perished; neither have they any more a Portion for ever in any thing that is done under the Sun.*

It puts an end to the Work of good Men to all the Hardships and Difficulties they are exercised with here; to their Wars with their own Lusts, and their Conflicts with their Spiritual Enemies; to their severe Mortifications, and constant Watches; their striving, and running, and pressing forward towards the Mark for the Prize: So S. John assures them, *Rev. xiv. 13.— The Dead that die in the Lord, rest from their Labours.* It puts an end to all the Persecutions they suffer for their Faith and Religion from their Enemies of it, to all the unkind and injurious Usage they meet with from Men; for

Death, as Job speaks, iii. 17. *The Wicked shall be free from troubling, and the Weary are at*

Finally, it puts an end to all that Good or Bad can do or suffer, which shall come to their future Account: According to the Condition their Work is in when Death calls them hence, will their Reward be when they come to Judgment; for every one is to be judged according to what he has done in the Body, 2 Cor. v. 10. Nothing to be done by, for any in the intermediate State; for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave, Eccles. ix. 10. But if the Tree falls, Ch. xi. 3. towards the South, or towards the North, i. e. as several of the Fathers, and Estius and other Romish Commentators expound the Place; if a Man dies in a State of Grace and Salvation, or of Sin and Damnation, *in the Place*, i. e. the State, *where it falleth, there it shall be.*

But tho' a Man's latter End be the Dissolution of the present Union of Soul and Body, and puts a final Period to all the Actions of this Life, yet is it the Opening of a new Scene, the Entrance upon another State; for tho' the Body moulders into Dust, yet it is not annihilated, *and the Spirit returns to God that gave it*, who knows where all the Parts of Matter, whereof the Body consisted,

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are dispersed, and can and will at the Day recollect them, and again join the same Body, tho' refin'd and spiritualized, to the same Soul, to be together inconceivably and eternally happy or wretched, according to the Man has behaved himself here.

And in the mean time, the Soul has great Share of Bliss or Misery immediate upon the Separation: The Scriptures represent the Soul, when separated from the Body, far enough from a State of Insensibility or Inactivity, (*Apoc. vi. 10. Luke xvi.*) To Think, is of the Essence of a Rational Soul, which must therefore think as long as it does exist. Death, indeed, is compared to a Sleep, but during their Conjunction, while the Senses are shut up with Sleep, and the Body ceases from Action, the Soul can exert those Acts which are proper to her, can think, remember, infer, perceive Joy or Grief; yet many times, things are represented in Dreams more lively and strongly, and so as to make more vigorous Impressions, than the Mind could have received from them when the Man was waking. Why then should not the Soul in her separate State perform those Actions, in which she does not always depend upon the Help of Corporeal Organs, and sometimes can operate more freely without them? Why may not the Soul

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Soul look back upon its Behaviour when it was in the Body, and forwards to that Eternal State to which it is now unalterably con-
signed, and in which it must with the Body be for ever rewarded or punished? Why should not this be the *Rejoicing* of the Soul of a good Man, even the *Testimony* of his Conscience, that in *Simplicity* and *Godly Sincerity* he has had his *Conversation* in the World, 2 Cor. 12. that he has pass'd safely through all the dangers to which he was exposed while he was in it, and is now out of all Possibility of falling short of Heaven: That he has done the Work which God gave him to do, and has now nothing more to do but to receive his Wages; that he has finished his Course, fought the good Fight, kept the Faith, and there is a Crown of Glory ready for him, which the Righteous Judge shall give him at the Day? 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

On the other hand, why should not the Soul of a wicked Man look back with the bitterest Regret and Sorrow upon the Sins it was guilty of in the Body, and forwards with the greatest Dread and Terror at the endless Punishments that await him for them. He must reflect, my Day of Grace is past, the Season of Repentance, all Possibility of being reconciled to my offended God, and escaping the insupportable Effects of his just

Wrath and Indignation, over ; nothing now remains, but a certain Expectation of fiery Vengeance, which already begins to flash in upon me, and in which I must be tormented for ever. These Reflexions and Prospects of separated Souls, are Earnests of that full and perfect Joy or Misery which will be their everlasting Portion, when they shall be reunited to their proper Bodies ; and if there was nothing else from which they might be denominated Blessed or Wretched, by these alone they would in some measure antedate Heaven or Hell.

But what farther Employments, and glorious Manifestations, pious Souls may be capable of in Paradise, in *Abraham's Bosom* where the Scriptures represent them after their Departure from the Body ; or what farther Anguish and Horror wicked Souls may feel in their Prisons, where they are reserved in Chains of Darkneſs, to the Judgment of the Great Day, we cannot certainly tell : But this we may rest assured of, that both the one and the other shall be very happy or miserable, in such a Way as is suitable to their Condition, while they are separated from their Bodies, and shall be completely and everlastingly so, when after the Resurrection they shall be united to them again. When the vertuous and holy Soul shall with the utmost Complacency join that Body again

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which had been devoutly offered in this Life as a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and the Members thereof employ'd as Servants to Righteousness, unto Holiness; that Body which had been brought under by Watching and Fasting, disciplined by denying its craving Appetites, and refusing to indulge and gratify its Senses; that Body which was advanced as near as Matter could come to the Nature of the Soul, and which being raised, is now quite purged from its Dross, and made a Spiritual and Incorruptible Body, qualified for an indissoluble Union, with which she must for ever continue in a State of perfect Happiness and Glory: When the vicious and sinful Soul shall with Horror and Amazement, greater than that with which she parted from it, meet again that Body which should have been the Temple of the Holy Ghost, but was miserably defiled and desecrated, prostituted to all Riot and Sensuality, and the Members of it yielded Servants to Uncleaness, and to Iniquity unto Iniquity: That Body, which had been the Instrument of her Villanies, and must be Sharer in her Punishment, which being raised, is indeed capable of an inseparable Union, and endless Duration; but with which she must be for ever tormented in that Place, *Where the worm dies not, and the Fire is not quenched.*

This, all this, is included in our *Latter End*, which is a Time when we shall leave this World, and enter upon a new and surprising State, when our Souls and Bodies shall part, our Souls be happy or miserable according to their Capacities in their separate Conditions, and Souls and Bodies after they are re-united perfectly and eternally so as we have behaved ourselves, and done well or ill here.

Before I proceed to shew what is implied in the Word *Consider*, it may not be amiss to form some Propositions concerning our *Latter End*, which may be the Objects of your Consideration: As,

1. That it is very certain, that such a Time as this will once happen to every one of us: *It is appointed to Man, every Man once to die, and after that the Judgment.* This I need not take Pains to prove to any that believe the Scriptures, or do but observe the daily Method of Providence in the Government of the Rational World.

2. That tho' it be certain that such a Time will once come, 'tis not certain when it will come; by which I do not only mean that we must consider of our latter End or Death as very uncertain to us, (which every body will allow, there being nothing more common, than for Persons, when they would declare

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clare their utter Ignorance of any thing, to
I do no more know it, than I do the
of my Death) but we must consider the
ter End of particular Persons, or the Day
every one's Death, as not peremptorily
etermined and fixed by any absolute Decree
God. This I observe for this Reason;
cause for a Man to consider his latter End,
the Day of his Death, as absolutely and
alterably decreed and set, would not be
Means to make him wise, which yet is the
nd that the Consideration in my Text
ould conduce to. By Wisdom in Scrip-
re, is generally meant Vertue and Piety
nd the Fear of the Lord, which are the on-
true Wisdom. But now to consider my
tter End, or Time of my Death, as abso-
tely set, that I cannot die before, nor live
ter such a Time, this will be so far from
eing a Means to work Vertue and Piety in
e, that it will very much obstruct, indeed
quite defeat the Success of other Means ap-
ointed for that Purpose. For Instance,

The natural Tendency of some Vertues,
r some Vices to prolong or shorten Life,
ust certainly be an effectual Method to pre-
ail on some, *those that have long Life, and*
would fain see many Days, to practise those
ertues, and avoid those Vices: While then,
uch are persuaded that Sobriety, Tempe-

france and Chastity, will contribute to the lengthening their Lives; and Luxury, Drunkenness, and Incontinence, to the hastening their Ends: This Persuasion must be a forcible Motive with them to those excellent Vertues and a strong Preservative against those heathenish Vices; But the Efficacies of these Methods are quite destroy'd by the Belief of this Proposition, that the Time of every Man's Death is absolutely fixed and determined; for if it is not the most constant and careful Practice of those Vertues that can add one Hour to a Man's Life, nor can the loosest Indulgence in those Vices take one Hour from it.

Again, besides the natural Tendency of Vertues and Vices to protract Life, or hasten Death, there is a farther Motive to the Practice of that, and avoiding of this, from those Promises and Threats of God, whereby he has engaged himself to lengthen the Days of Good Men, and to cut short the Days of the Wicked.

Thus in the Fifth Commandment, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* So the Psalmist *Pf. xxxiv. 12. What Man is he that desireth long Life, and loveth many Days, that he may see Good? Keep thy Tongue from Evil, and*

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ips that they speak no Guile; depart from
evil, and do Good, seek Peace, and pursue
&c. And in Prov. iii. 16. Wisdom, i. e.
Piety and Holiness, is said to have Length of
Days in her Right Hand. On the contrary,
the Workers of Iniquity are threatned, Ps.
xxvii. 2. to be cut down soon like the Grass,
and to wither as the green Herb; and particu-
larly of the Bloody and Deceitful Men, it is
said, Ps. lv. 23. that they shall not live out
half their Days. 'Tis true indeed, these Pro-
mises and Threats are not always literally
fulfilled; but neither are other Temporal
Promises and Threats; for in all of them,
however absolutely they may be expressed,
God still reserves to himself a Power of do-
ing otherwise, if he shall see That more con-
ducing to the Good of his Servant, or the
Accomplishment of his wise Purposes. The
best may be cut off in the midst of their
Age; it may be they have been early and
eminently holy, and soon ripe for Glory;
and the sooner God takes such to himself,
he is better and not worse than his Promise;
it may be he is resolved to punish a wicked
People: And if the Good, however young,
are taken away from the Evil to come, that
they may not see, nor be involved in the
common Calamity, still this is Kindness to
them.

Wicked

Wicked Men, on the other hand, may sometimes be permitted to live to a great Age, if they are moderately so, to try possibly whether God's Forbearance may at last lead them to Repentance; or, if they are very bad, to be employ'd as God's Scourge to Mankind, and Instruments in the Execution of his Judgments upon them. That for these, or other just Ends of his Providence, God does not always make good these Promises and Threats in kind, yet they hold as other Temporal Promises and Threats do, and ought to be Motives to the Performance of those Duties, and avoiding those Sins to which they are respectively annexed.

But what Effects can they have upon him that believes, that there is a fatal Period appointed, beyond which he shall not live, and before which he shall not die? How can such a one be prevail'd upon, by God's Promises of long Life, to honour his Parents, to keep his Tongue from Guile, to seek Peace and pursue it? Or be deterr'd by his Threats of soon cutting him down, and taking him off before he comes to half his Days, from working Iniquity, from Blood-thirstiness and Deceitfulness? When he must believe, that notwithstanding he should incur those Threats, he shall yet live out all his Days, all the Time appointed for him; and altho

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should entitle himself to those Promises; he shall not live one Day farther.

Once more, the Sword of the Civil Magistrate, Capital Punishments are appointed Fences to secure the Laws, to deterr Men from great and enormous Crimes; and no more effectual Method can humane Wisdom devise, or Power execute to restrain Men from Murders, Thefts, and other such Violations of the Laws of Man and God too, as to make those that are guilty of them pay their Lives for them. But alas! the Man that is satisfy'd that the Period of his Life, the Hour of his Death, is absolutely set and determined, is armed against all Impressions that the Dread of these Punishments can make upon him: For what, tho' the Laws have made it Death to rob on the Highway, to break a House, to commit Murder or Treason; and what if I should be guilty, and convicted of any of these Crimes? Why, if my Time be not come, I shall not care for them, the Magistrate's Sword shall not reach me; but if my Time be come, I shall die, whether he execute me or not; and when the set Time is come that I must die, what great matter is it whether I die by a Fever, or by a Halter; upon a Bed, or upon a Gibbet?

So

So many Methods to persuade Men to Vertue, and restrain them from Vice, are obstructed by the Belief of this Position. But do not the Scriptures assert it? For do not Job say, in Ch. vii. 1. *Is there not an appointed Time to Man upon the Earth?* And Ch. xiv. 14. *All the Days of my appointed Time will I wait, &c.* So indeed our Translators have render'd it: But what they have translated an *Appointed Time*, is in both Places in the *Hebrew*, the vulgar *Latin*, and the *Chaldee*, a *Warfare*; and in one of them, the *Septuagint* has render'd it *περιπατήσιον*, which signifies either a State of Temptation or Tryal, or of Dangers from Pyrates and Robbers. So that all that these Places import, is only this, that our Time here is a Time of Hazard and Difficulty, of Conflicts and Encounters with Spiritual Enemies, and Temporal Crosses and Afflictions: And what's all this to the proving a particular Time set for every individual Man's Death? But does not Job say at the 5th Verse of that Chapter, *His Days are determined, his Number of his Months are with thee, thou hast appointed his Bounds, that he cannot pass* And does not this prove a fix'd Period for every Man's Life? No surely, for Job is here speaking of Individuals, but of Mankind; *His Days, his Months, are the Days*

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Months of *Man*; for he speaks in this of the same Subject, that he did in *ver. 1.* viz. *Man that is born of a Woman*, i. e. *Man* in general; and then all that can be gather'd from hence is, that God has decreed a Term of humane Life, which no *Man* shall pass: It does not from hence follow, that he has determin'd how much of the general Term every particular Person shall live; he has fixed a Number of Years, which no *Man* shall exceed; but surely, this notwithstanding, he may extend or cut short the Years of particular Persons within that general Number: And this is all that *Job* affirms in this *ver.* that there are certain Limits set to humane Life: He says indeed at the 1st *ver.* that these Limits are but narrow, that the Days of *Man* are few; and this is the third Proposition I shall advance concerning our *Latter End*.

3. That as it is certain, that such a Time will once happen to every one of us, but uncertain when, so 'tis sure, that it cannot be long first; for *what is our Life?* the longest Life that any one arrives to? Has not the Scripture compared it to a *Vapour* that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away? To the *Grass* that groweth up in the Morning, and in the Evening is cut down and wither'd; to the *Wind*, and many other things of

of the shortest Continuance? Has It bounded it within the Compass of 70, or most 80 Years? And if there are some very rare Instances of those that go a little beyond that Term, how inconsiderable are they in Number, in comparison of the many, many more, that do not reach to the Half of it? But we (my Brethren) have lived good part of our Time, some more, some less already. And would we form a just Judgment of the Part which may be yet to come, let us beseech you, do it from the Notions we have of that which we have already past: We have lived, it may be, 30, 40, 50, or more Years already: Well, let us look back, what do we think of 'em? Do they appear to us to have been a long Time? No surely, if we would speak out, we should say, they seem but as Yesterday that is past. Suppose then we should expect, (and really we must be very sanguine to do it) to repeat that Number, to live as many forwards, will the 30, 40, or 50, we hope yet to see, be longer than those we have already past? No, they will be as quickly over, and make but just the same inconsiderable Space; so soon passeth away the longest Period of Life, and we are gone: But how much short any of us may fall even of that Period, how much sooner our latter End may come, is known only to

God:

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God: Scripture and Experience assure us, that it must come in few Years; and we do not know, but it may come in few Days or Hours.

Thus I have shew'd what is included in our *latter End*, and resolved it into some Propositions, the Summ of which is this. That we must all of us very soon, we know not how soon, leave this World, and enter upon another State, where we shall be immediately Happy, or Miserable, in a great degree, and at the Resurrection completely and everlastingly so, accordingly as we have conducted and demean'd ourselves in this life; and this is to be the Object of our Consideration, which implies three things.

1st, An undoubting Assent to the Truth of it: For Propositions, however true in themselves, if they are not so to me, if I am an Infidel or Sceptick in them, if I disbelieve or doubt of them, can make no great Impressions upon me.

2^{ly}, A frequent reflecting upon it, and revolving it in my Mind; for Propositions, which I have assented to, if I think not of them, are not like to have much more Influence upon me, than those which I deny in question.

3^{ly}, And chiefly, a diligent Application of it to the Government of my Life; and the

the conducting it by such Measures as the Belief and Reflection will suggest; for only such a Practical Consideration of his *latter End* will make a Man wise.

II. How wise it will make him, whose wise Practices will be the Effects of such Consideration, I am to shew under my second General. And surely, 'twill be allowed that it will make him very wise, if it make him wise for this World, and for the next too.

1. As to this World, That is certainly true Wisdom, which will carry a Man the most quietly through it, with the least Disturbance and Vexation: Now most of the Disturbances and Uneasinesses we meet with here arise either from our own false Notions and imprudent Pursuit of the good Things of this World, or from those Evils which befall us by the Direction or Permission of Providence; and the Consideration of our *latter End* will go a great way towards the preventing or removing the former, and the alleviating and supporting us under the latter.

To their false Notions of the good Things of this World, are owing all that Torment and Vexation, which Men that want them feel in envying the Condition of others, and repining at their own: They think Riches and Honours, and Greatness and Power, &c.

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be necessary to Happiness; that he that has
em, must be a happy Man, which he can-
not be that has them not: Hence proceed
their Fretting and Grieving at the prospe-
rous Lot of their Neighbours, to whom they
think Providence has been very partially fa-
vourable, and their Murmuring and Discon-
tent at their own State, which they account
very miserable; and while they judge it so,
certainly is so.

To their false Notions of these things are
owing the Disappointments. Those many
ones meet with that have them. They had
formed mighty Ideas of them, promised to
themselves entire Satisfaction from them;
but when they come to enjoy them, they
find no such thing in them. 'Tis impossible
that things so disproportion'd to it should
ever fit things so unsuitable, ever satisfy
the Mind, which must be uneasy under the
deceit; and the higher the Expectation had
been rais'd, the greater must the Disappoint-
ment be.

Now all this Disquiet, which proceeds
from Envy, Repining, and Disappointment,
could be prevented by rectifying our Mi-
stakes, and forming just Thoughts of these
things. Did we believe them to be, what
indeed they are, false and unsatisfactory,
mixed and allay'd, short and uncertain, un-

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able

able to give us full Content in our best Estate, or to afford us the least Comfort when we shall most want it, we should not judge those happy that had them, nor ourselves unhappy if we have them not, and consequently should neither envy their's, nor repine at our own Lot; nor should we be disappointed if ever we should be possess'd of them; for how little Happiness forever the Enjoyment might give us, it would not be less than we expected.

And to the rectifying our false Notions and giving us true ones of these Things, the due Consideration of our *latter End* would very much contribute: Did we but daily represent to ourselves the last Scene of Life and consider what Thoughts we shall have of these Things then, it would make us more reasonable in our Apprehensions of them now. Fancy, my Brethren, (the Imagery may not be very entertaining to some, but it will be very instructive to all;) Imagine yourselves upon your Death-Beds, given over by your Physicians and Friends, Nature so far decay'd, or a malignant Distemper so far advanced, that you have no Hopes of continuing many Hours under the Weakness of one, or Violence of the other, but expect that this Night your Soul will be

require

Considering our Latter End. 179

quired of you: At this time you will behold these Things in a true Light, and be able to make a just Judgment of them; and now, I beseech you, do they appear to you? Are they indeed the desirable Things you once took them for? Will they afford you that entire Happiness you promised yourself from them? Make Tryal of them; Will they give an agreeable Entertainment to your thoughts? Can you reflect with Pleasure upon your stately Houses, and rich Furniture, now you are just going to change them for a narrow Coffin and poor Shroud? Upon your large Demesnes, and vast Tracts of Land, when presently six Foot of Earth will be the Pittance you must be confined to? Upon your Honourable Posts and swelling Chaises, when the Grave, in which you are lying down, knows no Distinction of Qualities; but the Dust of the greatest Prince is here undistinguishable from that of the meanest Beggar? Have you any Relish or Soft for the Luxury of your Tables, the Variety of your Dishes and Wines, when your own pampered Bodies are immediately to make a Repast for the Worms? Will they do any real Service to your Body or Soul in this time of Extremity? Will they abate your Pains, or quiet your Conscience? Will they remove your Distemper, and rescue

you from the Grave? Will they comfort your Soul in her separate State, or afford you any Help in the Day of Judgment? Will they blind the Eyes of your Judge, or suborn the Evidence that is to come in against you? Can they purchase you a Pardon, or but a short Reprieve? No, no, so far from it, that if your Wealth and Riches have been abused to Luxury, Riot, and Sensuality, your Power and Greatness to Injustice, Oppression and Violence, or any of your Temporal Enjoyments to be the Ministers of your Vices; they will make a severe Article in your Indictment, and come in as Witnesses to prove it.

And is it thus, ye flattering, empty, deceitful Vanities? Is there no Comfort or Assistance to be had from you? Can you neither ease my Body nor Mind? Can you neither keep me in this World, nor go with me into the next? Will you basely desert me in my greatest Distress, leave me to the Torture of my Body, and the Rack of my Conscience, to the Fury of my Disease, the Power of Death, and the Anger of my Judge, whom by your Means I have provoked?

Wretched Cheats! What a Fool have I been to place my Affections upon you? Happy they who sit the loosest to you, and have the least to do with you, beyond what Ne-

cessity,

Considering our Latter End. 181

efficiency, Convenience, and the Opportunity of doing Good require.

And will this be our just Sense of these things when we come to die? And is it certain That Time is not far off? Why, frequent Reflections upon this must rectify our Mistakes about them at present as to their Value, and teach us not to rate them above their Worth; and then we shall not be uneasy because others have them, or we have them not, nor disappointed if we are not very happy when we have them.

Again, What Troubles and Vexations do people undergo, that are engaged in the eager pursuit of these Things? That are for heaping Bag upon Bag, and adding Land to Land, but scarce ever arrive even to the Sense of the rich Fool in the Gospel, to know that they have enough, and say to their Soul, *take thine Ease*; but still drudge on in their laborious Quest after more?

How do they rack their Thoughts, and break their Sleep in laying Designs? Wear out their Days and Bodies too in executing them? How anxiously solicitous are they for the Success of their Projects and labours? How very unhappy if it does not answer their Expectations? And how far from happy if it does? Neither Disappointment nor Success puts an End to their Toil,

but Either affords an Argument to persuade them to go on.

But would these Persons consider the *latter End*, how near the Time is that would put a full Stop to their Pursuit after the Things, and their Enjoyment of them; 'twould certainly make them turn short, allow themselves some time to enjoy the Fruit of their Labours, and not foolishly waste away a whole Life, only in making Provision for Life: Did they reflect what it is they take such Pains to provide for, a Bubble & Shadow, a Flower of a Day, 'twould surely shew them the Folly of making such lasting Provisions for a thing of so short a Duration; 'twould teach them the Wisdom to proportion their Cares and Endeavours to the things of this World to the time they are like to continue in it; and not to labour and lay up for Ages, when only a few Days are more than they can call their own.

Then for the Evils that befall us be it whether in our Persons or Estates, our good Names, our Friends and Relations, which whatsoever they affect us, still this Consideration affords some Relief; be they Privative or Positive Affliction, as occasioned by the Loss of something we valued and loved, or by enduring something very painful or grievous to us.

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The Consideration of our *latter End* will teach us, that we could not possibly have been much longer happy in the former, nor be much longer uneasy under the latter. The greatest Support to a Man in Misery, is to be able to look to the End of it; and the nearer Prospect he has of that, the better able he to bear it. Now all the Miseries of this Life can last no longer than Life, they must cease at our *latter End*: Since then our Lives are short, our Miseries cannot last long; since our *latter End* is near, our Deliverance cannot be far off; and these Reflections must lessen our Sufferings here, and give us some Support under them.

2. But the greatest Advantage of the Consideration of our *latter End* is, that it makes us wise for the other World. We have seen that by our *latter End* is meant not only a time when we must die and leave this World; but that were all, if there were no Life in another World, the only Wisdom the Consideration of that could teach us, would be to make the most of this;) but when we must enter upon another Life and State, which will have no End, the Joys or Sufferings thereof will exceed those of this present Life, as much in Degree as in Duration, and surely, if we heartily assent to, and seriously think upon these Premises, we must

make this Conclusion from them, that it is our Wisdom to provide for this future State, tho' it were at ever so great a Distance of Time from us: If we must once enter upon it, and thence be for ever happy or miserable in it, a thinking Man must judge all his Time here most wisely employ'd in preparing for it, tho' he should live as many Ages as the most sanguine Man promises himself Days.

But since it is certain, not only that this Time must once happen to every one of us, but also that it must happen very soon, we know not how soon, the Consideration thereof will teach us these particular Points of Wisdom:

1. To be frugal of our Time, and to band it to the best Advantage: This short Day is all the Season of working; when the Night comes, no one can work. And is my Time here at best very short? Have I a great Work to do in that short Time? Does my eternal Bliss or Wo depend upon my finishing that Work? And can I be so foolish as to squander away this Time in Idleness or Riot in vain Recreations, and loose Conversation? Shall I suffer Sleep, and Pleasure, and Sin, to share it among them? There are such Fools in the World, whose Time seems to lie upon their Hands, and they are mightily p

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it to contrive how they may pass it away. It is certain these Persons never consider their *latter End* at all, or at least not as they should do. For did they heartily believe, and seriously reflect, that their Life here is only a Time of Probation and Preparation for an endless Life hereafter; that this Time is very short, and extremely uncertain; they would surely be so wise, as not only to cut off all those foolish Expences of their precious Time in Idleness, Folly, Company, and Pleasures; but they would retrench from their Worldly Business, and even from their necessary Sleep, and think all little enough to do their great Work in.

2. This should teach us not to defer our repentance; there are too many who, being convinced of the Necessity of repenting in order to be saved, resolve to do it sometime, but still put it off for the present, and flatter themselves with the Hopes of Opportunities of doing it hereafter: But did these Persons consider their *latter End*, they would see what a desperate Hazard they run, in trusting their eternal Condition to so weak and uncertain a thing as a Puff of Air, the breath that is in their Nostrils, which must of itself go away in a little time, and is unable to be stopped by Thousands of Accidents every Hour.

Except

Except I repent, I am sure to perish; I have no Time to repent in but this Life, this Life cannot last many Years, and I know not whether it may last one Day. Shall I then be so mad, as to put off my Repentance one Day; to venture it, and my Soul with it upon the Continuance of that, which this very Night, which the next Moment, may put an end to? Certainly I must be very stupid, if these Reflections do not teach me this wise Lesson, to set about it immediately to begin this Day carefully and impartially to search my Heart, and examine my Ways sorrowfully to acknowledge my Sins before God, humbly to implore his Pardon and Forgiveness of them, through the Merits of Christ, to form strong Resolutions against them for the future, to beg the Assistance of God's Grace, and in the Strength of that to watch and strive, and fight against them, till I am, thro' him that loves me, more than Conqueror over them.

3. This Consideration of our latter End would teach us this Wisdom for the whole World, to make use of all the Means of Grace that are offer'd us, and not neglect one Opportunity that is put into our Hands of waiting upon God in his holy Ordinance or of doing Good to our Neighbour, according to our Power.

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He has appointed these Ordinances, as the Means of our Growth in Grace, and Spiritual Improvement, as the Food of our Souls; whereby they are to be nourished to Eternal Life; and by doing Good, being rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, we lay up in store for ourselves good Foundations against the Time to come, that we may lay hold upon that Life. Whenever then the Returns of the Seasons for God's Publick Worship, for praying to him in the great Congregation, for hearing his Word, for receiving of the Blessed Sacrament, call upon me to attend upon those Duties; or when a happy Occasion is offer'd me (and I have Abilities to do it) of ministering to the Temporal or Spiritual Necessities of a poor Brother, as often as any Opportunity is afforded, whereby I may promote the Glory of God, or contribute to the Good of Man; the Consideration of my Latter End will teach me to lay hold on it, and not omit one, because my Time being so short and uncertain, I do not know whether ever I may have another.

4. *Lastly*, This Consideration will teach me to go on with the Work and Service of God, and persevere to the End with Alacrity; for it shews me these two Things:

1. That

1. That my Service can be but short. And
 2. That I shall quickly receive my Wage.
 My *latter End*, I am sure, cannot be far
 off, but may be much nearer than I expect it
 which will both put an end to my Work
 and give me Possession of my Reward. Does
 the short Day of Life then shut up my La-
 bour, and am I sure of my Penny in the
 Evening? Is my Race but as it were a Span
 and is there a Crown of Glory ready for me
 at the end of the Race? Surely, the Short-
 ness of the Stage will not suffer me to faint
 or grow weary; but the Nearness of the
 Prize will animate and encourage me to press
 forward to the Mark with Chearfulness and
 Joy.

But these are Thoughts that do not sit
 very easy upon many of us, and we think
 ourselves very wise in removing them far
 from us. Some love this Life, and others
 fear the next: The former have placed all
 their Happiness in this World, and cannot
 endure to think of leaving it; this is their
 Heaven, and they will not cast so much Al-
 ley into the Joys of it, as to reflect they must
 soon have an end.

The latter have such a dreadful Account
 to make in the other, that it seems to them
 a forestalling of Hell, to give Way to the
 Thoughts of a Day of Reckoning; and
 there

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Therefore if ever they press upon them, they
at them as *Felix* did S. Paul, when he
reasoned of *Judgment to come*; Go your
for this time, and when I have a conve-
Season, I will send for you.

This is such unaccountable Folly, that had
not daily Experience of it, we should
think it possible for reasonable Crea-
tures to be guilty of it; for of those that
in this Life, no one can be so ignorant, as
to know, that his *latter End* is hastening
towards him, or rather he is hastening to-
wards it, whether he consider it or not:
that however he put away the Thoughts of
he cannot put off the Evil Day; which,
it finds him unprepared, as it must do if
thinks not of it, will be an Evil Day in-
deed: Nay, he must know, that he cannot,
with all his Art, secure himself entirely a-
gainst the Return of those uneasy Thoughts
on every Shock of his own Body and
Health, and Sickness or Death of a Friend;
every Instance of another's Mortality must
bring him in mind of his own: Whereas on
the other hand, he that considers his *latter*
End, takes the most likely Course to pro-
long his Life: Those Vertues and Duties,
which such Consideration will engage him
to practise, are very apt, both by their na-
tural Tendency, and by virtue of the Divine

Pro-

Promise, to increase the Number of his Days; but however they may be, they will, I am sure, make him live longer than those that may see more Days. For is the Life of Man to be measured by the Clock or Dial, or the Revolutions of Seasons? *S. P.* speaking of some, the Widows that live in Pleasure, says they are dead while they live, and most certainly all those that are given up to Voluptuousness and Sensuality, that are neither serviceable to God, nor useful in the Generation, are dead to all Rational Life; they may live the Life of a Brute, but not that of a Man; that Man only truly lives who answers the Ends for which the Author of it gave him his Life; that employs it in the glorifying his Maker, helping his Brother, and improving his own Mind; and such will be the Employment of His Life who duly considers his *latter End*; and that so employs his Life, will never be uneasy at the Apprehensions of Death; and how quickly soever that comes, will have lived a great while, and to good Purpose.

Again, how ridiculously senseless is it for a Man to avoid the Consideration of his *latter End*, because he is afraid of a Judgment after Death? Whereas those very Fears should engage him in this Consideration, being the only Method he can use to relieve him

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himself from them: He believes this Judgment, otherwise he could not be afraid of it; he is afraid of it, because he is not prepared for it. And should not the natural consequence of this Belief and Fear be, that therefore he should speedily set about preparing for it, rather than endeavour to suppress all Thoughts of it? Which, when he has done all he can, he will not be able to stifle; for Conscience will not always be beaten off by the Succession of his Companies and Diversions, the Noise of his Sports, and the Fumes of his Wines; she always dogs him, and will some time find him alone and cool, and will then be heard, and make him sufficiently uneasy, especially if at some time the Hand of God be upon him, and he begins to set his Sins in Array before him.

But could he secure himself all his Life from the Uneasiness of that very troublesome Companion, that not one disquieting Thought of the dreadful Judgment-Day could ever get Admittance, yet let him assure himself, that however he dreams not of that Judgment slumbers not, the Day is appointed, and the Judge ordained, who has told us what will be the Doom of that Evil servant, that thinks his Lord delays his coming, and therefore quarrels with his Fellow

low

low Servants, and eats and drinks with
Drunken, viz. that his Lord will come in
 Hour when he thinks not of it, and shall
 him asunder, and appoint him his Portion
 Hypocrites, where shall be Weeping and Gnaw-
 ing of Teeth.

And if it be so grievous to him to think
 of that Punishment here, what must it be
 feel it for ever? And what a Madness is
 for him, by industriously avoiding the Con-
 sideration, most certainly to entitle him
 to the dreadful Execution of it.

Whereas a due Consideration of it, and
 careful Pursuit of those wise Methods which
 such Consideration would suggest, would
 cure him not only from being miserable
 it hereafter, but from being uneasy in think-
 ing upon it here; the Thoughts of that Judg-
 ment are uneasy to him, because he has
 much Guilt upon him, that he is sure to be
 condemn'd; the Day of Account terrible
 because he is vastly in Debt, and altogether
 insolvent: But the just Consideration of it
 would engage him in such a Course, as would
 entitle him to a Pardon, and put him upon
 such a careful Inspection into, and wise Man-
 agement of his Accounts, as that the vast
 Sum for which he cannot answer himself
 shall be charged upon his All-sufficient Sure-
 ty: And then how can the Thoughts of

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sure Judgment and Reckoning be terrible
him who has his Pardon ready to plead;
his Accounts fairly stated?

In short, all the Terrors Men feel at their
apprehensions of Death and Judgment, are
owing not to the Consideration of their *lat-*
ter End, but to the Want of that Considera-
tion; and are so far from being reasonable
objections to hinder them from it, that they
are strong Motives to persuade them to it.

Thus I have dispatched the two Things I
proposed, have shewn what it is to consider
our *latter End*, and what wise Practices would
be the Effects of such Consideration: I shall
conclude with making That my hearty Wish
for you, which was *Moses's* to the Israelites;
that you were wise, that you understood this,
that you would consider your latter End.





A SERMON preached before the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled, in the Abbey-Church of Westminster, on Wednesday Jan. 19. 1703-4. Being the Fast-day appointed for the Imploring of a Blessing from Almighty God upon her Majesty and her Allies engaged in the present War: As also for the humbling ourselves before him in a deep Sense of his heavy Displeasure, shewed forth in the late Dreadful Tempest, &c.

Isaiah LVIII. Ver. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

3. ---Behold, in the Day of your Fast, you find Pleasure, and exact all your Labours.
4. Behold, ye fast for Strife and Debate; and to smite with the Fist of Wickedness: Ye shall not fast as ye do this Day, to make your Voice to be heard on High.
5. Is it such a Fast that I have chosen? A Day for a Man to afflict his Soul? Is it to bow down his Head as a Bulrush, and to spread Sackcloth and Ashes under him? When thou call this a Fast, and an acceptable Day to the Lord?
6. Is not this the Fast that I have chosen, to loose the Bands of Wickedness, to undo the heavy Burdens, and to let the Oppressed go free, and that ye break every Yoke?
7. Is it not to deal thy Bread to the Hungry, and that thou bring the Poor that are cast out to thy House; when thou seest the Naked, that thou cover them; and that thou keep not thyself from thine own Flesh?



WE are this Day met by the pious Command of our Sovereign, to humble ourselves before God by Fasting and Prayer: And the Words which

have read, may very properly be improved
to serve in some measure the Ends for which
Authority has appointed this Day's Fast; if
we come hither with such Dispositions, as
that dreadful Providence which gave Occa-
sion to it, ought in Reason to have worked
in us.

I shall not take up your Time in describing
that amazing Tempest, or recounting the
great Losses which the Publick or private
Persons have sustained by it: Surely such a
Stroke of Providence, as we must look very
far back into our History, to find any thing
near coming up to it, which we felt so
very lately, and which has left such Marks
behind it, that we can hardly pass the Streets,
or travel the Roads, but we see some Re-
mains of it, cannot be so soon forgotten,
that you should already need to be put in
mind of it.

Much less shall I search into Natural Cau-
ses, or labour from thence to account for
this terrible Blast: No, *The Lord was in that*
Wind; it was appointed or permitted by
him, *whom the Winds and Seas obey*, and
whose Word the Storms and Tempests fulfill, to
waken and chastize a secure and sinful
people.

I shall only beg of you to remember,
that Thoughts you then had, when your

Hearts, if I may use our Saviour's Words in another Case, *were failing you for Fear*, and *for looking for those things, which you then apprehended, were coming upon you*. These were such Thoughts, as I will venture to say, neither the most Graphical Description of the astonishing Storm, nor Rhetorical Amplification of the Hurt done by it, can now raise in you.

Reflect what awful Apprehensions you then had of the Divine Majesty, what Regret you felt for your Disobedience, what Vows you made of more faithful Service to him for the future; how willingly you would then have purchased, even with the utter Renunciation of all the Poms and Vanities of the World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, such an Opportunity as you now enjoy, seeking for Peace and Reconciliation from your offended God.

Think over again those Thoughts and Resolutions, which your Minds were full of when you every Moment expected your own Houses to have been made your Tombs, and yourselves buried in the Ruin of them, and bring the same now into the House of God: Be but as serious and earnest this Day in your Petitions for his Mercy, and Resolutions of Obedience, as you were then; and we may through his Goodness hope, that

is Fast will prove *such a Fast as he has chosen, This Day an acceptable Day unto the Lord.*

That I may contribute what I can to that blessed End, I have chosen this Text, which is a Reply sent by God to a Complaint of the Jews, wherein they seemed to implead his Justice, as if he had dealt hardly by them, not making such Returns to their Fastings and Humiliations, as they believed those several Services had deserved from him. God, in Answer to their impious Expostulations, tells them, that their *Fasts*, as they performed them, were so far from meriting from him, that they were highly displeasing to him; shews in what Instances they were faulty and defective; appeals to them, whether they could believe those *Fasts to be such as he had chosen*, or as could be called *acceptable Days unto the Lord*; and then points out to them those several Duties, the Practice whereof would recommend their Fasts to his Acceptance, and make *them such as he had chosen*.

I shall beg your Patience while I treat of the Arguments now before me in this Method:

I. I shall consider in general the Duty of Fasting, its Nature, Ends and Uses.

II. I shall reflect upon those Faults of the *Jews* recorded in my Text, which made their Fasts unacceptable to God.

III. I shall enquire whether we of this Nation are not too justly chargeable with the same Faults in ours; and whether we have not therefore too much Reason to fear that God may expostulate about our Public Fasts, as he did with them; *Are they such Fasts as I have chosen?*

IV. *Lastly*, I shall lay before you, and press you to the Practice of such Things as may make this Day of Humiliation, appointed by Authority, *an acceptable Day unto the Lord.*

I. I am to speak of Fasting in general, which, as to the Meaning of the Word, is only an Abstinence from Food: The Greek Word for it, signifies *not to eat*; and in the Hebrew Phrase, of afflicting of the Soul, we must understand the Sensitive Part of Man for that is it which feels the Uneasiness of Fasting.

Whether this Abstinence should be total or partial, from all Sorts of Food, or only from such as are more pleasant and nutritive, and how long it should be continued

cannot be determined by any general Rule
that can reach all Persons; but the Consti-
tutions and Strength of particular Persons
must be considered, and such Abstinence
prescribed by them respectively, as will best an-
swer in each the Ends and Uses of Fasting.

We are not to look upon Fasting in itself
as a thing that recommends us to God; for
we consider only the bare Eating or not
eating; *Neither are we the better if we do
not eat, nor the worse if we do:* But it is the
good Ends for which Fasting is appointed,
and which are promoted by it, that make
it acceptable to God. Regard therefore must
ever be had to those Ends, and such Mea-
sures taken as may be most conducive and
serviceable to them; and they are chiefly
these:

1. For the crucifying of the Flesh and the
passions thereof, the subduing and mortifying
the sinful Appetites of the Body, and extin-
guishing those impure Flames which burn
within. Now that Nutriment which con-
stant, plentiful, and especially which luxuri-
ous Eating does administer, is the Fuel
that feeds those Flames, and makes them
rage; but Fasting, abstaining from such Eat-
ing, is the taking away that Fuel, for want

of which the Fire will be weakened, and the degrees go out.

2. For the better disposing the Mind to Prayer, and other Spiritual Exercises; The corruptible Body (as the Wise Man says) is too apt, at all times, to press down the immortal Soul; the Load of Matter which we carry about us, too constant a Hindrance to the Mind in her Motions towards Heaven. But these Clogs are then most heavy upon the Soul, and she is most sensible of them when the Vessels are filled and stretched with plentiful Eating and Drinking: Then the Head is clouded, the Thoughts are disturbed, the Operations of the Mind languid, and cannot exert themselves with any Vigour. Hence our Lord exhorting his Hearers (xxi. of S. Luke) to *watch and pray always* (as a Preparatory thereto) bids them to *beed that their Hearts be not at any time overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness* which would render them very unfit for their Duties; but Fasting (which is frequently in the Bible joined with Prayer) is a great Help to it; it prevents or disperses the Clouds which darken the Understanding; it lessens the Weight that lies upon, and presses down the Soul; it helps to collect and compose the Thoughts, and gives a Freed

Activity to the Mind, that she can put herself forth with Quickness and Intention.

3. For the testifying our Shame and Sor-
 row, our Anger at ourselves for our Sins,
 whereby we have provoked God. Indeed,
 we are not inwardly afflicted for them, no
 outward Pretences will do any good; but
 where those outward Expressions proceed
 from, and are Evidences of a Mind truly
 humbled and contrite; when we abstain
 from our daily Bread, as a Token that we
 judge ourselves unworthy of it; when by de-
 priving our Bodies those grateful Refreshments
 which they call for, when by expressing a
 just Indignation at, and acting a sort of holy
 revenge upon ourselves, we declare and
 manifest before God our deep Sense of our
 offending him, how much we are confound-
 ed and grieved for it; these Signs and Ex-
 pressions will no more be despised by Him,
 than those *broken and contrite Hearts* from
 whence they proceed.

These are the chief Ends of Fasting;
 which when it is performed with due Re-
 gard to them, and not out of any Hypocri-
 tical Design to get Applause from Men, or
 vain presumptuous Fancy of compounding
 with God, or making Him Satisfaction for

our Sins by it; whether we voluntarily impose the Duty upon ourselves, or observe in Obedience to the Commands of our Superiors, we may be assured from the Scriptures 'twill not be displeasing to God.

We have God's exprefs Commands for to his People the *Jews*, in *Levit. xvi. 29* and *Cap. xxiii. 27.* and *Numb. xxix. 7.* The Tenth Day of the Seventh Month is there appointed to be yearly observed by them as a Day of Fasting and Humiliation; which the *Hebrews* exprefs by *afflicting the Soul* and *this was to be a Statute to them for ever* i. e. to be Obligatory upon them as long as their OEconomy should last. Besides this yearly Fast, they were obliged to observe divers others in After-Times. The Prophet *Joel* frequently and earnestly presses them to this Duty; *Cap. i. 14. Sanctify a Fast and cry unto the Lord.* And *Cap. ii. 12. Turn ye with Weeping, and Fasting, and Mourning.* And ver. 15, *Ge. Sanctify a Fast, call a Solemn Assembly, --- Assemble the Elders, --- Gather the Children, and those that suck the Breast and let the Priests weep between the Porch and the Altar, and say, Spare thy People, O Lord.* And then in the following Verses are added many gracious Promises to encourage them to it. Holy Men of Old practised it, as we

and in the Instances of *Ezra, David, Daniel,*

And that we may not think this to be such a *Jewish Rite*, as concerned only those that lived under their Dispensation, we read that when the Prophet *Jonah* denounced God's Judgment against the City of *Nineveh*, those Gentiles proclaimed a Fast, and observed it universally from the greatest to the least, from their King to his meanest subject: *None of them fed or drank Water, tasted any thing, but were all covered with sackcloth, and cry'd mightily unto the Lord.* And the Success was as remarkable as their fast; for though God had passed Sentence upon them, and appointed the very Day for their Destruction, and ordered *Jonas* to publish it in these Words: *Yet Forty Days, and Nineveh shall be destroy'd.* Yet, after all this, notwithstanding this seemingly peremptory Denunciation against them, upon their observing the Fast appointed by the King, in so extraordinary a manner, God reverses his Sentence, and repented him of the Evil that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not. And to put this Matter out of all Doubt, the Blessed Author of our Holy Religion, in his Sermon upon the Mount, in *Mat. vi. 16, &c.* though he does not directly command Fasting, yet supposes it a Duty to be

be practised by Christians, gives Direction for the right Performance of it, and upon such a Performance assures us of a Blessing from our Father which is in Heaven; *When ye fast, ye my Disciples, be not as the Hypocrites, ---- But thou when thou fastest, anoint thy Head, and wash thy Face, that thou appear not unto Men to fast; and thy Father which seeth in Secret, shall reward thee openly.*

Indeed, he does in that Chapter censure the hypocritical Practices of the Pharisees who fasted to be seen and admired by Men and tells them, that since the obtaining the Praise of Men was the great End they proposed in those Exercises, That was all the Reward they must expect for them. But from our Lord's reprovng the Hypocrisy of the Pharisees Fasts, and declaring their Unacceptableness to God, it can no more be concluded, that a true Fast, answering the End of Fasting, is not a Duty incumbent on Christians, or not pleasing to God, than that the *Jews* were not obliged to fast, or (when they performed that Duty in a due Manner) did not serve God acceptably, can be proved from those Faults, which, in my Text, God reprehends in their Fasts, and which I am in the

II. *Second Place to consider.*

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i. The first was this, That tho' they used great outward Austerity, and severe Discipline towards the Body, there was no inward Change or Reformation of the Mind: *They afflicted their Souls for a Day*, i. e. abstained a whole Day from gratifying their Senses; *they banded down their Heads like Bulrushes, and spread Sackcloth and Asbes under them*; they put themselves into the Posture and Habit of sorrowful Penitents: But for all this God tells them, that *in the Day of their Fast they found Pleasure*; they did not mortify their Lusts as well as their Bodies. They would for one Day abstain from their Food, but not from their Sins; or if they did for a Day forbear both, it was that they might return to both the next with the greater Appetite; and therefore God asks, if they could call such a *Fast an acceptable Day unto him?* Alas! none are such, but those that are attended with a thorough Reformation; when the Mind is humbled, as well as the Sensitive Part afflicted; the sinful Inclinations of the Soul denied, as well as the craving Appetites of the Body: But this was the least of their Care; whatever Hardships they put upon the Flesh, they would not quit their fleshly Lusts; they could part from a Meal or two, but not from their Vices; they could turn to God with

with Crying and Fasting, but not with their Hearts; an empty Stomach, or a solid Habit they could offer to Him, but not a broken Heart; a Day they could spend in some external Severities, but would not dedicate their whole Lives to his Service: And this was the first Fault which made God reject their Fast with Indignation; it was an Outside and Hypocrisy, no real Repentance or Turn of the Soul towards Him.

2. The second was their Divisions and Contentions: *Ye fast* (says God) *for Strife and Debate, and to smite with the Fist Wickedness.* Covetousness and Oppression, Selfishness and Revenge, did too much reign among them: There was little (or none) of that Publick Spirit, that Contempt of private Interest where the Publick was concerned; that Unanimity, that mutual Trust and Confidence, which are the Strength and Beauty of any Body Politick. They were broken into Parties, or rather every one was setting up for himself, and studied only how to gratify his own Humour, his own Covetousness, or angry Passions; and they abused their very solemn Days of Fasting and Humiliation to these Ends, and seem'd to abstain from their Food, and the Work of their ordinary Callings, that their Heads might

might be more clear to contrive, and their hands more at liberty to execute wicked designs against one another. *Ye fast* (says the Lord) *for Strife and Debate, and to* --- These seem the Ends of your Fast-
ing, these the Purposes you intend to serve it; and by this means you *make your Voice be heard on High*; i. e. the Voice of your uncharitable Contentions, the Voice of the Oppressor, and the Voice of the Complainer; these *are heard on High*, they are come up to me, and have reached my Ears; they have quite drowned the Voice of your Prayers, and render'd all good Effects of your Fast, and made it an unacceptable Day unto me.

The last Fault reflected on, which spoils their Fast, was their Want of Compassion and Charity to those that were in Affliction. This seems imply'd in the 7th Verse; *Is not this the Fast that I have chosen, to deal thy bread to the Hungry; that thou bring the Poor that are cast out to thine House: When thou seest the Naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thy own Flesh?* This was the Fast that God had chosen; but he tells them, their's was not such as he had chosen; and undoubtedly they were faulty in this respect. They did not sympathize with the Hungry, the Naked, and Destitute; did

did not provide them Meat, and Cloathing and Habitation; *They hid themselves from them*, would not hear their Complaints, regard their Misery, or minister to their Necessities, tho' *they were their own Flesh, Israel* as they were, descended from the same common Stock with them: Nay, tho' they were related to them by a more noble Alliance, Sharers with them in that glorious Privilege of being the peculiar People of God, whom he had distinguished from the Nations round about them, by blessing them with the Light of his written Word, a holy Religion, a pure Worship; when their Neighbours, and the whole World besides, were involved in Ignorance, Idolatry, and Superstition. Tho' these their poor Brethren were favour'd so far by God, as to be admitted to partake with them of his Spiritual Things, they thought it a great Matter that they should partake of their Carnal Things, and would not communicate thereof to them, how much soever they stood in need of them.

Thus Hypocrisy, and Want of true Repentance towards God, Divisions, and Want of Unity among themselves, Hard-heartedness, and Want of Bowels towards the suffering Brethren, spoil'd all their Devotion, render'd their Fasting ineffectual to any good Purpose.

purpose, and made God have as little Regard
 to Them and their Services, as they had to
 God and their poor Brethren.

These Faults we find them frequently
 charged with, and severely threatned for in
 other Places of Scripture; and these un-
 doubtedly were very instrumental in pulling
 down the several Judgments that befell them,
 and that miserable Destruction which at last
 utterly consumed them. Neither God's se-
 verer, nor his softer Methods could work
 sincerity and real Reformation among them;
 in their Afflictions they would pretend to seek
 God, and enquire early after Him; neverthe-
 less (as David observes) they did but flatter
 Him with their Mouths, and lyed unto Him
 with their Tongues. Upon his saving and de-
 livering them from the Hands of their Adver-
 saries, for a Time they seemed to believe his
 Words, and would sing Praises to Him; but,
 within a while, they forgot his Works, and
 could not abide his Counsels.

The incorrigible Hypocrisy of their Hu-
 miliations God afterwards reproved by the
 Prophet *Zechariah*, in much the same Style
 with that which he had before used to the
 complaints in my Text. During their Cap-
 tivity in *Babylon*, they had yearly observed
 several Fasts; the Fast of their Fourth Month;
 which their City was taken; the Fast of
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the Fifth, in which their Temple was burnt;
 the Fast of the Seventh, in which Gedaliah
 their Governor was treacherously slain; and
 the Fast of the Tenth, in which Nebuchadne-
 nezzer began to besiege Jerusalem: But they
 having obtain'd a Decree from Cyrus for the
 Rebuilding of their Temple; and that Decree
 having been confirmed, and the thing
 encouraged by Darius, and the Building
 having been carried prosperously on; they
 sent to enquire of the Lord, whether the
 Fast of the Fifth Month, which was occasion'd
 by burning of their former Temple, ought
 to be continued now, when their new one
 was in such a forwardness. To which
 God sent a Reply, directed to all the People
 and the Priests, in these Words; *When ye
 fasted in the Fifth, and in the Seventh Month,
 even in those seventy Years, did ye fast at all
 unto me?* One would have thought that
 People in their Circumstances, under so long
 and miserable a Captivity, should have been
 very serious in their Fasts, and that the Sense
 of their Afflictions should have made them
 in good earnest, when they were humbling
 themselves before God for those Sins which
 had provoked him to lay those heavy Judgments
 upon them: And yet, it seems, that
 their Devotions were but Pageantry and
 Shew: There was nothing of sincere Repen-

pentance

ance or Amendment of Life; wherefore
asked them, *Whether they had fasted at*
unto him?
A like Thread of Hypocrisy there was,
ran through their Fasts, and Prayers,
and Alms, and all their Services in our Sa-
vour's Time. Their outward Pretences to
Sanctity, without any inward Purity,
a real Concern for God or his Honour,
an Occasion to those several Woes which
the Lord denounced against their Scribes
and Pharisees not long before their final Ex-
tinction.
And as from the Beginning they had been
given to Factions and Divisions, and often
strid for them; so towards the End of
their Polity, they were blown up to such a
Height, that they were not only some
of the Causes which provoked God, but
showed the Methods which He made use of
to accomplish their Ruin. Those miserable
Factions which their Jealousies and Suspi-
cions of one another had broke them into,
made them an easy Prey for the Romans;
indeed, they themselves did the Work
for the Romans; for them, in the first place
turning up their own vast Stores of Provi-
sions, which should have enabled them to
have held out a Siege, which they had re-
solved to undergo; and afterwards butcher-

ing one another in such a barbarous manner that when their Besieger *Titus* saw the vast Numbers of dead Bodies that they threw over the Walls, to shew that he had no hate in that miserable Slaughter, lifting up his Hands to Heaven, cried out, It was none of his doing.

And that their want of Bowels for those in Distress, their *hiding themselves from their own Flesh*, their Insensibility of the sufferings of their Brethren had not the least Share in bringing God's Judgments upon them, may be gather'd from that Prophecy in the 6th of *Amos*, where God tells them *They put the Evil Day from them*, they lived in Ease and Pleasure, indulged themselves in Luxury and Wantonness; but they were not grieved for the Afflictions of Joseph; they had no Concern or Pity for their Brethren of the Ten Tribes, that labour'd under the Tyrannical Oppression of their Enemies. Therefore, says he, for this Reason, to make them feel it themselves, *they shall go Captive with the first that go Captive*, ver. 7. And at the 8th, *The Lord swears by himself, I abhor the Excellency of Jacob, and hate his Palace Therefore will I deliver up the City, with that is therein.* Here God threatens them that lived at their Ease in *Sion*, vers 11. and had no Compassion for their suffering Brethren

Ten Tribes, of whom a great Part were
gone into Captivity, that they should
next, that he would give them also up
to the *Affyrians* Hands.

Now all these Things happened unto them
Ensamplers, and are written for our Admo-
tion, to the Intent that we should avoid
their Sins, and repent as far as we have been
guilty of them.

III. Let us therefore in the third place en-
quire whether we of this Nation are not
highly chargeable with the same Sins which
they committed, and so severely smarted
for; and whether we have not too much
reason to fear that God may expostulate
with us about our Publick Fasts, as he did
with them; *Are they such Fasts as I have
preferred?*

We have had formerly Monthly Fasts, and
many others since appointed by our Gover-
ners: But whether they have been observed
unto the Lord, in such a Manner as he has
been pleased with, we have too much Grounds
to doubt, or rather too little to make any
doubt of it,

I. Let us enquire in the first place into
the Sincerity of our Humiliations; Whether
our outward Expressions were real Indica-

tions of Minds truly awakened, and broken with a deep Sense of our Sins, and the Sin of our Nation? Where there is such a Sense it will be attended with that godly Sorrow which worketh Repentance; a Sorrow which will evidence its Sincerity by a careful Leaving of those Sins which we mourn for: If there be no Forfaking, there is no Hatred of them: If we resolve to go on with them, nay, if we do not resolve against them it is too plain we still retain a Love for them, and all the Trouble and Regret we express was but meer Pretence and Hypocrisy. The Rule which our Lord has laid down for to judge of Prophets by is a very certain one for Penitents too; *By their Fruits shall know them.* Those only are truly penitent who bring forth the meet Fruits of Repentance: And what Fruits can we shew?

If the most daring Affronts to God, or the questioning his Being and Providence; if the denying or disputing the Divine Authority of his Revelations; if audacious Inquiries into the Manner of his Subsistence further than he has discover'd it, and bold Oppositions to what he has reveal'd of himself; if divesting his Eternal Son, God blessed ever, of his Divine Nature, because he died for our Sakes humbled himself to take a humane Nature upon him; if denying

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satisfaction, which, by suffering in our Na-
 ture, he made to the Divine Justice for our
 sins; if exposing the whole Mystery of our
 redemption; if light or profane Use of
 God's holy Word, even to Raillery and Bur-
 lesque; if irreverent Use of his Sacred Name
 in common Conversation, or rather impious
 abuse of it by Swearing and Cursing, the
 so common Rhetorick of many Persons
 in Discourses; if the yet more daring Attempts
 to make God a Party to Injustice and Vil-
 lany, by calling him to be a Witness to
 our Iniquities; if a gross Neglect of, or a formal,
 customary, irreverent Attendance upon his
 Ordinances; if the prophaning his Sabbaths,
 and converting that small Pittance of our
 Time, which he has reserved for his own
 more solemn Worship, to secular and sinful
 Uses; if a vilifying and despising of those
 Persons that are appointed and set apart to
 his more immediate Service, and to minister
 about Holy Things:

If the more publick Oppressing of others
 by Force, or abused Law, or the privater
 Methods of Cozening and Cheating, Trick
 and Circumvention in Dealing, the making
 Advantage of their Weakness and Necessities;
 If the abusing our own Bodies by Incon-
 tinence and Intemperance, by Chambering and
 Wantonness, by Rioting and Drunkenness:

In short, If an avowed Defiance to a
 God's Laws, natural and revealed, whether
 they respect our Duty to God, to our Neigh-
 bours, or to ourselves: If these are the pro-
 per Fruits of Repentance, we have brought
 them forth so abundantly, that there is Rea-
 son to fear that no Country or Age could
 ever shew more such Penitents than ours.
 But if these Things are directly contrary to
 the true Ends of Fasting, and the very Re-
 verse of what we professed, and solemnly
 vow'd upon our Days of Humiliation; then
 are we as chargeable with Hypocrisy in our
 Fasts as the *Jews* were: Nay, to shew how
 far we have exceeded their Impieties, per-
 mit me to mention one Instance, though
 cannot do it without Horror, of a late daring
 Affront to God, unparallel'd by the *Jews*,
 or any civilized Nation, which looks like
 defying, if not a ridiculing of his Judgment.
 I mean, that impudent Representation of
 'Tempest on the Stage, so soon after we
 had felt that dreadful One, that gives Oc-
 casion to our Meeting this Day. I think
 should not have been just to my Subject,
 I had omitted to take Notice of this un-
 precedented Piece of Profaneness; and cer-
 tainly will be no Digression from it to add, that
 till these Entertainments are reformed, and
 those vile Purposes to which they have been

long prostituted, and restored to their original Design, the exploding of Vice and commending Vertue, by exposing the Demerits of one, and representing the Beauty of the other, it is in vain to hope to see the Nation reformed; and while we *hate to be reformed*, may not God with too great Reason ask us; *Are your Fasts such as I have chosen?*

2. Let us enquire in the next place, whether we have any Advantage over the *Jews* in the second Particular? Whether we are more divided than they? More heartily united among ourselves? More unanimous in carrying on the Publick Good? Alas! has it not been the Policy of our Enemies, from the very Reformation, when they could not conquer us by outward Force, to endeavour to make us destroy ourselves by intestine Divisions? And have we not too easily fallen in with these Designs of theirs? I shall not look farther back than the two Reigns preceding the Revolution: What Properties were we then made? Divided into Factions and Parties by the Cunning and Artifices of the Jesuites? How were the several Parties play'd by turns against one another by the unseen Hand, and managed like meer Machines to pursue their Designs, and our own ruin? Towards the End of the last of those
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two Reigns, our common Danger being more near and apparent seem'd to have taught us a little more Wisdom as well Charity, and made us more reconcilable to one another, and willing to provide for the common Safety.

And one would have hoped, that by the happy Accession of his late Majesty to the Throne, a Prince who had no Interest of his own, Politick or Religious, separate from that of the Kingdom, and who had a true Design to make up our Breaches, and unite all in one common Interest, that great Benefit might in some measure have been obtain'd and we might have been made like *Jerusalem*, as a City that is at Unity within itself. But alas! our Charity and Prudence were soon blew over with our Fears; the same Thing was still among us, and troubled *Israel*. Private Interest and private Revenge which will slip no Opportunity of being justified, divided us at the very Beginning of his Reign, and put us upon such Contentions as were between the Men of *Israel* and the Men of *Judah*, upon their bringing *King David* to *Jerusalem*, each pretending and striving for the greater Interest in the Kingdom. Their Contentions ran very high indeed, and produced an unnatural Defection and Rebellion of the Men of *Israel*, who think

themselves not sufficiently regarded by David, though they were of the first that proposed the bringing him to *Jerusalem*, yet of an unreasonable Resentment were the first that revolted from him. Our Contentions were not carry'd so far; however, This was One unhappy Effect of them, that the wisest Counsels, the prudentest Designs for the Publick Good, often met with the violentest Oppositions, and fiercest Endeavours to defeat them, from some, who would have been hard put to it to have given a better Reason for their obstructing them, than because they had been laid, or were to be executed by such as were of a different Party from themselves. No one can forget what Difficulties were started, and Rubs thrown in the Way, to retard our Preparations, and to feeble our Enterprizes; and these Things, no doubt, helped to prolong that War which we were then so uneasy under, as there is so much Reason to believe, that that War abroad accidentally contributed to keep us quieter at home; for no sooner was that over, and we at Peace with our Enemies, but we were more at Leisure to fall out among ourselves; and God knows there were too many ready to lay hold of the Opportunity, which they so fatally improved, that we became too like a Ship, which having, by the Skill and Conduct of an excellent

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lent Pilot; weathered the Storms abroad, out-lived the Dangers of the Seas, baffled the Pyrates, escaped the Rocks and Sands, and come safe into the Port; was, through the Contentions and Madness of the Crew, in Danger of being sunk in the Harbour.

That Peace did not last long: God thought fit to correct our Factions at home by another War abroad. The Ambition of a Prince, whom no Treaties or Oaths could bind, made it necessary for our King to form new Alliances, and enter into a Confederacy with several Princes and States of Europe for the common Safety: And just when War was unavoidably breaking out, and when by the unwearied Application and wise Management of his Majesty, all Things were so disposed, that we had the most promising Prospect of a happy Issue of it, and that he might have obtained the great End which he had aimed at through the whole Course of his Life, the establishing the Peace and Quiet not only of those Countries to which he bore a more near Relation, but of all Europe, and the reducing the Power of the great Disturber of them: Then was God pleased to take him away from us, at a Time when his Loss seemed to be of the last Consequence to us by reason of his great Courage and Conduct in War, and Interest with all the Confederate

rates.

But even in this Judgment God remembered Mercy, and seated our present gracious Queen, whom God long preserve, peacefully upon the Throne: A Queen! after his own Heart, and ours too, if we did but understand our true Interest, to the promoting of which She seems to have given herself entirely up, despising the Softness and Pleasures which might be thought more allowable in her Sex, and going chearfully through such Difficulties and Fatigues as might have startled some of the other.

Upon her Majesty's putting on the Royal Crown, we talked much of burying all our Differences and Marks of Distinction, and uniting heartily in the common Interest; and indeed, no one in reason could have expected less; those Grounds of Dissatisfaction, which some had pretended in the last Reign, being taken away in this; Her Majesty being *English* by Birth and Education, and bred up from her Infancy in the Church of *England*, having imbibed the Principles of this Church with her Milk, and constantly lived a Shining Ornament to her Communion; and besides, being allow'd to be next and directly in Succession to the Crown by All those who set up the Interest of a pretended Prince abroad. But all these fair and promising Hopes were soon like to have been blasted

blasted by the scurrilous Discourses and scandalous Pamphlets, with which some Incendiaries laboured to blow up the Coals; to revive the old, and kindle fresh Flames among us. 'Twas not enough that there were Dissenters of several Denominations unhappily divided from the Church, but the Church must be divided against herself, by the Distinction of High and Low Church Men: Such as have never separated from her, but lived in constant Communion with her; nay, some who have adorn'd her Communion by their exemplary Lives, edified her Members by their constant and successful *Labours in the Word and Doctrine*, defended her Constitution, her Doctrines, Discipline and Worship, against all Opposers, in their unanswerable Discourses and Writings, been Confessors to her in Times of Danger, and who, we cannot in Charity doubt it, would be ready, if called, to die Martyrs for her, have been traduced and stigmatized as Enemies and Betrayers of her. How sad Effects this wicked Practice has produced, is too melancholick a Reflection to dwell on.

'Tis certain, that neither the wonderful Successes with which God blessed ours and our Confederates Forces, by Sea and Land the last Year but one, were able to make Peace and Union among us; nor the slack

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ing those Successes the Year immediately
to abate our Heats and Animosities;
and now God seems, as his last Effort, to
have taken the Matter more immediately in
his own Hands, and by a dreadful Storm
from Heaven shattering our Houses, and de-
stroying our Shipping, and so many of our
men, the living Bulwarks of this King-
dom, to try to allay those Storms of Con-
tention which our Enemies have raised, and
to keep up among ourselves, even to the
hazard of shipwrecking the whole Nation.
Thus God himself seems to have been
justifying our Factions, and trying to unite
us by various Dispensations of his Provi-
dence, sometimes by shewing us our com-
mon Danger at home, by bringing near to
us a threatening Ruin just ready to swallow
us up; then, when that seem'd in some mea-
sure to have softned us, by raising up a De-
stroyer, to be his Instrument in rescuing us
from the Jaws of Destruction; afterwards,
by exciting Foreign Enemies to divert us
from quarrelling and fighting among our-
selves; then, when we had lain some time
under that Discipline, by trying us with a
blessed Peace, and now again by a necessary
War, by various Events of it; and at last,
by setting the Winds in Array against us. And

And what Effects do we at present find all these Methods? Are we heartily united among ourselves, or are we in a good Diffusion for it? Are all Marks of Distinction forgot? Are we resolv'd, laying aside private Quarrels and Disputes, to act unanimously for the Common Good?

Alas! Are we not still miserably torn in Parties and Factions? Are not too many among us more zealous to promote the Signs of their Party, than the Interest of the Nation? More jealous of the opposite Party than apprehensive of the Common Enemy? More industrious to crush them, than to subdue him?

And while we are thus divided, thus full of Strife and Debate, may not God, with much Reason, expostulate with us as he did with the Jews? *Is it such a Fast as I have chosen?*

3. Lastly, The other Fault which renders the Jews Fasts unacceptable to God, is their want of Compassion to those in Distress, *their hiding themselves from their own Flesh*. Indeed, they understood *those of their own Flesh* to be Jews only, of the same Nation with themselves; but, as God made all Men of one Flesh, and all are descended from the same common Parent; so that *Wall of Partition*, which divided Jews from all other

and confined their Charity to those within
 their own Pale, being taken away by Christ,
 and there being now no Distinction of Jew
 and Gentile, but all being one in Christ Jesus,
 we are now to look upon all Men as our own
 self, and not to hide ourselves from any that
 are in Want or Misery; tho' still, in case of
 Competition, Regard must be had especially
 to those that are of the Household of Faith.

And how have we discharged this Duty?
 God be praised there are among us some
 burning and shining Lights, some bright Ex-
 amples of a true primitive Charity; the Lord
 increase the Number of them: But the very
 frequent Complaints both of old and impo-
 verished Persons, that by Age or Accident are
 disabled from Work, and of poor Children
 which we meet with every Day in the Streets,
 and at our Doors, and of such likewise as,
 being by Sickness and Weakness confined at
 home, can do nothing to help or support
 themselves, and are forced to send abroad
 for Relief, do too plainly shew, that the
 Charity of many is waxed cold, and that
 they do not as God has prosper'd them, in
 proportion to what he has blest them with,
 lay aside some of it for the Relief of Christ's
 poor Members, *their own Flesh*. And no
 wonder that there is little Charity, where is
 so much Vanity and Excess in Furniture,

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Apparel

Apparel and Equipage, in Eating, Drinking, and all Instances of Luxury, as is to be seen according to their respective Abilities, amongst almost all Ranks of Persons. 'Tis not strange that those that lie upon Beds of Ivory, and stretch themselves upon their Couches, and eat the Lamb out of the Flock, and the Calves out of the midst of the Stalls, that chaunt to the Sound of the Viol, and in vogue themselves Instrument of Musick, that drink Wine in Boords, and anoint themselves with the chief Ointments, are not grieved for the Afflictions of Joseph. Such soft and luxurious Persons have no Sense of their poor Brethrens Wants, and consume that upon their own Lusts, with which they should relieve them.

I shall make no farther Complaint in the general, but must beg Leave to lament the Case of a particular Sort of Sufferers, and the Hard-heartedness of some towards them who, tho' not of our own Nation, are nearly ally'd to us by Spiritual Relation, Members with us of Christ's mystical Body, and reformed Members too. I mean those Protestant Confessors who were forced some Years since to quit their own Country, that they might keep their Religion; who yet have been treated by some, as if their being banished out of their own Nation for Christ's Sake

ake, made them unworthy to be received
to any other. Some have deny'd them
chief, or afforded them very little, and
even that grudgingly, and as it were of
necessity; some have thought it too much
that they are permitted to live here at all,
that they are supported by others, or allowed
to maintain themselves by their own Labour.
But whither would they have them go? to
their own Homes, or any Popish Country?
There they must change their Religion, or
die for it: And other Protestant Countries
have their Shares of them, and may at least
well object against them as we.

I cannot conclude this Head, without re-
minding you of that dreadful Threat which
was denounced by Amos against the in-
credulous Jews, *That they should go Captive*
with the first that go Captive, and that he
should deliver up the City, with all that is
therein.

God grant that we may not, by too nearly
imitating their Sins, provoke him to make
us like them in their Punishments too. In-
stead of avoiding whereof, I proceed,

IV. To my fourth and last Head of Dis-
course: Under which I am to lay before
you, and press you to the Practice of such
things as may make this Day of Humilia-
tion an acceptable Day unto the Lord.

And what can do this, but our careful avoiding those Sins which the Jews are here reprov'd for, and practising their contrary Duties?

I. In the first place, we must be sure to avoid that foolish and provoking Sin of Hypocrisy. How senseless an Attempt is it, to impose upon him that knows all Things, To put an outside Devotion, and counterfeit Repentance upon him that *searcheth his Heart, and trieth the Reins?* *Thou Fool, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?* And of how great Guilt must this Sin be?

The Hypocrite must believe, either that God does not see through his vain Pretence, or does not discern the Falseness of his Heart, or if he does, that he has no Regard to our Goodness and inward Piety: The former is plain Atheism, and the latter is to believe wickedly, that God is such a one as himself. But let us not be deceived, God will not be mocked; he requires Truth in the inward Part, and nothing but Honesty and Sincerity can recommend our poor Services to his Acceptance. We should therefore, upon such Days as these, retire very seriously into ourselves, commune with our own Hearts, and our Ways to Remembrance, compare them with that Law which ought to have been the Rule

of them, search out in what Instances they have deviated from it, what Judgments and Miseries by erring from it we have exposed ourselves to, the Temporal ones in this Life, and the more dreadful Eternal ones in that which is to come: And being humbled under a deep Sense of our Sin and Guilt, we must apply ourselves with Earnestness to our compassionate God, through our powerful Mediator, laying fast hold on that Anchor of Hope, which is cast out to us by him, resolving sincerely to close with the gracious Terms offered, and to discharge honestly, whatever it may cost us, as much as in us lies, the Conditions required; upon the Performance whereof our Everlasting Welfare does depend; but in this we must be very sincere and hearty: For however we chafe with ourselves, we cannot impose upon God, and nothing but Sincerity and Integrity will be accepted by him.

2. In the second place, we must have a Care to avoid Strife and Division. How unfit shall we be to seek Reconciliation with God, while we are at Enmity one with another? We must follow after the Things that make for Peace, both Ecclesiastical and Civil.

The Consideration of Duty in this Case is strongly supported by that of Interest: For how probably, almost necessarily, will

a Kingdom torn by Civil Dissentions, and a Church divided by Schisms, *be brought to Desolation?* Especially when dangerous and powerful Enemies are watching for Opportunities to enter in upon them at the Breaches their own Members have made.

As for us, what Course can we take or think of to secure that happy Constitution which we, above all Nations, are blest with in Church and State, but by heartily uniting in the Interest of our present Government and establish'd Religion? What can they change to, but either to the Oppressions and Confusions of a Popular Government, or rather Anarchy, and the various wild Schemes of Religion which shall be advanced by every Enthusiast; or to the insupportable Yoke of Popish Tyranny in Church and State, which *neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear?*

Let us then weigh Things calmly, like Men govern'd by Reason, and not hurried on by Prejudice and Passion: Let us consider whether any Change that can be projected by the wisest Politician must not necessarily engage us in more insuperable Difficulties and load us with infinitely heavier Burden than any that can be charged by its most implacable Enemies upon our Establishment as it now stands; Whether the breaking in upon

on the present Settlement, and the Succession to the Crown, as it is now limited, must not unavoidably involve us in Blood and Confusion, and end at last in the utter ruin of our Liberties, and all that is dear to us. And that these may not look like wild and groundless Suggestions, let us think whether those that are making and fomenting Divisions among us, can have any other Design than to introduce a Change in our Government; and whether those Convulsions, which Divisions occasion in a Political Body, do not naturally tend to its Dissolution.

Let all of us that wish well to our established Government join Hearts and Hands for the Support of it; Let us be far from reasoning, if at any time we, or those that we think fittest for them, are not employed in posts of great Trust and Power; but let us cheerfully contribute what we can in our private Spheres to its Preservation, and heartily rejoice in its Prosperity, whatever Hands it may be administered by.

Let all that have the Happiness to be Members of our excellent Church, have that Charity for each other, as not presently to conclude those Betrayers of her Interest who go not with them into the same Methods of supporting it, but believe that they may have the same just Zeal with themselves for

her Security and Prosperity; tho' they may differ from them in the Means of procuring it.

Let such as are dissatisfied with the Terms of her Communion consider, whether any or all of the several Schemes of Discipline and Government set apart among our Dissenting Brethren, can be any Barrier against the Invasion of Popery; whether our Church has not shew'd herself to be the great Bulwark against it; whether they can satisfy themselves that there are Terms of Communion imposed by her, which the Word of God has made it a Sin to comply with; and if they cannot convince her of Sin in this respect, whether little Scruples, which have no Countenance from Scripture, and either are owing to the Prejudice of Education, or have been suggested to them by some who are Persons they have had in Admiration, ought to come in Competition with so known a Duty as that of Unity is; or can excuse a Sin of so deep a Dye as Schism, which is severely censured in the Sacred Writings and those of the ancient Fathers, and which has, in our Case, so dangerous a Tendency to the Subversion of the whole Reformed Religion.

If we would reason coolly about these things, we should all find it to be our true

rest, as well as bounden Duty, to join heartily together for the Support and Preservation of our present Establishment in Church and State: We should not hearken to the sly Insinuations of our common Enemies, who are endeavouring to divide us, that they may find their Account in our Ruin: we should go through their Designs, and all their Artifices would have no other Effects upon us, but to make us know the better, and put us upon the stricter Guard against them. And were we thus heartily united in sincere Wishes and Endeavours for the Prosperity of our *Sion*, for the Continuance of those invaluable Blessings which God has so bountifully bestow'd and wonderfully preserved to us in our Civil and Religious Capabilities, as our Union would be the greatest humane Defence against the Attempts of our Enemies, so our joint Fasts, and Prayers, and Cries, would reach Heaven, and engage God on our sides; and then no matter who, or how many, are against us.

3. But in the last place, let us take heed of Unmercifulness and Heart-heartedness to those that are in Want or Misery: For, with what Face can we ask, with what Reason can we expect from God, Supplies for our Wants, or Succour in our Distress, if we refuse such Help, as we can give, to our poor Brethren
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in their Affliction? But Alms give Wings to our Devotions, and mount them to Heaven. *Thy Prayers and thy Alms*, says the Angel to Cornelius, in the 10th of the *Acts*; *are come up for a Memorial before God*. Our Alms are the Incense that perfumes our Sacrifices, and makes them ascend with a sweet-smelling Savour to God. Our charitable Distribution to the Needy, God looks upon as Loans to himself, and has promised to repay them with Use: Nay, our Saviour owns them as Gifts to him; *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me*. Who would not then retrench from his Expences, at least his superfluous ones, and lay up something, that he might put out to such Hands upon such Interest? Nay, to give to him, who has deserved so highly from us, and will make us infinite Returns of Glory for it?

Providence has now presented, and his Majesty has most piously recommended to us two kinds of Objects, both certainly very deserving of our Charity:

The first are, the poor Relicts of the Stormen that were lost in the late Storm. Not ever made a Doubt whether Widows and Orphans were not proper Objects of Compassion and Mercy; but these Widows and Orphans have a juster Claim to ours, they having been

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made so by their Husbands and Fathers dying in our Service, which they as surely did, being destroy'd by the Tempest, as they could have done if they had been kill'd in an Engagement with the Enemy; And shall not Good-Nature, Gratitude, Justice, and Interest, prompt us to return their Services and Sufferings for us in liberal Contributions to their desolate Relations?

The other are, the Persecuted, Banished, Protestants of *Aurange*; who, to preserve Faith and a good Conscience, have left their Country, Estates, Relations and Friends, and thrown themselves upon the Providence of God, and Charity of such as profess an Abhorrence of those *Romish* Abominations, their Non-compliance with which has occasion'd their Sufferings.

Surely, if Christ may be said to suffer in his Members, it is especially in those that are persecuted for the Sake of him and his Religion; and whatever charitable Supports are deny'd to Them, he will undoubtedly, at the Last Day, tell us were refused to Him.

Let us reflect, however willing some are to forget it, that it is not very long since we had but too just Apprehensions that what is now theirs, would have been our own Case, that we should have been forced to quit our Reli-

Religion or our Country; and if we had been driven abroad, and put to great Streights upon the account of our Religion, what should we have thought of those Protestants that should have deny'd us Relief?

Let us not deceive ourselves; if we can refuse our liberal Contributions according to our respective Abilities to these our distressed Brethren, 'tis much to be fear'd, that had we been in their Condition, we should hardly have suffer'd as they have done: For 'tis difficult to suppose that he should give his Body to be burnt for his Religion, that will not spare some of his Goods to feed them that are persecuted for it: He would scarce abandon his Country, and quit his whole Estate for a Cause, for which he cannot find in his Heart to part with a small Portion of it. And if we can hide ourselves from, shew no Regard, minister no Relief to these Resolute Confessors, 'tis a shrewd Argument, that we have no just Value for our Religion, as we have no Pity for those, who have with the utmost Hazard asserted it. And if we are yet to learn both these, how just will it be with God to teach us the Worth of our Religion by the Want of it, and Compassion to such as suffer for it, by making us experience what they feel? And what an uncomfortable

reflection will that of Joseph's Brethren be
 shewn to us, *We are verily guilty concerning*
our Brethren, in that we saw the Anguish of
their Souls, when they besought us, and we
would not hear: Therefore is this Distress come
upon-us.

Let us then contribute freely and chear-
 fully to them, remembring the Words of
 our Lord, *That it is more blessed to give than*
to receive; we cannot place out our Money
 to better Account than in Acts of Charity;
 nor in any Acts of Charity more advan-
 tageously than in such as these. By this we
 shall testify in some measure our grateful
 sense of God's Goodness in continuing to
 us the free Exercise of our Holy Religion
 in our own Country; and this will be the
 best Method to prevail with God to preserve
 it still to us, next to a general Conformity
 to the whole Tenor of it.

By these Means, by sincere and unfeigned
 Repentance towards God, by hearty Union
 and Concord among ourselves, by a tender
 sympathizing with, and chearful relieving of
 our poor Fellow-Members, those especially
 that suffer for *Righteousness-sake*, we may
 hope

hope to make this Fast an *Acceptable Day*
unto the Lord, and through his Goodness
 obtain those Blessings, for the procuring
 whereof it was appointed.

He of his infinite Mercy grant, that we
 may all in this our Day see and do the
 Things that belong to our present and
 eternal Peace, through Jesus Christ
 &c.



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*The Duty and Advantage of
setting GOD always before
us.*

SERMON preached before the
QUEEN at S^t James's Chappel, on
Sunday the 2d of March, 1706.

PSALM XVI. 8.

*I have set the Lord always
before me.*



THAT this Psalm was David's, we
have the Testimony of S. Peter,
Acts ii. 25. where he brings
him in speaking these Words of
my Text, and the following
verses to the End of the Psalm, concerning
Christ. But though David, being a Prophet
and

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and a Type of Christ, had in them a special Respect to the Antitype, in whose glorious Resurrection they were to be afterwards more eminently fulfill'd; yet, no doubt in the first and immediate Sense, they belong'd to himself, and so I shall now consider them And in them we may observe

*David's wise Practice, and
The blessed Consequences of it.*

His Practice he gives us an Account of in the Text; *I have*, says he, *set the Lord always before me.*

The blessed Consequences he relates in the following Verses, viz. an holy Assurance, that God, if he saw it best for him would deliver him from his Persecutors; and if, for wise Reasons, he should give his Life into their Hands, he would yet redeem his Body from the Grave, *Make known to him the Way of Life, and make him full of Joy with his Countenance.*

That which I would infer from both, this Proposition, That the right Practice of this Duty, of setting God always before us is the likeliest Course to promote our Temporal Security, and our everlasting Salvation. This was the Ground of David's Confidence in relation to both; and the same Con-
den

setting God always before us. 241

ence and holy Assurance may they raise to themselves, who lay the same wise Foundation for it.

Permit me then to explain to you the whole Course the Royal Psalmist took, and to commend his Practice to your Imitation; from the blessed Consequence it will produce.

I. For Explication of the Duty: And here I shall shew Three Things:

1. What is meant by *setting God before us.*

2. Under what Notion of him we are to *set God before us.* And

3. How we must set him *always before us.*

What is meant by *setting God before*

It would be too great an Affront to your Arguments, and Abuse of your Time, to proceed negatively in satisfying this Enquiry; but to shew that by *setting God before us* is to be understood, that we do, or can by Act of our Minds, make God to be present any where, where he was not, or privy to any Thing which he knew not before;

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who

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who, whether we think of him or not, present in all Places, and knows all Things. To proceed therefore affirmatively, in Duty are imply'd these two Things:

1. A firm Assent to, or hearty Belief of these two great Attributes of God, his Omnipresence, and Omniscience.

2. A practical Consideration of these Attributes, or Application of that Belief to the Government of our Lives.

1. A firm Assent to, or hearty Belief of these two great Attributes of God, his Omnipresence, and Omniscience. In stating these Doctrines, which are to be the Object of this Belief, I fear I should no more edify you, than satisfy myself, if I should take Measures from the nice Speculations of Schools, or the Results of those Enquiries wherein some thinking Men have, with much Freedom, indulged their Curiosities. It is a melancholick thing to reflect upon the Variety of Opinions, which these audacious Searches have produced, in relation to God's Omnipresence, which differ widely from one another about the Manner of it, and seem to agree in losing the Thing itself.

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Some say, that he is not present every where by his Essence, but in Heaven only by his Essence, and every where else by his Power and Providence: And if so, then his Power must be something diverse from his Essence, and may be conceived to be where his Essence is not.

Others say, that he is every where by his Essence; and of these, some hold that he is by way of infinite Extension; but how that which has not Quantity nor Parts can be extended, is pretty difficult to apprehend.

Others say, that he is every where after the manner of a Point, and that he is whole every where, and whole like a Point in every part of the World: And if this be so, that the whole Divine Essence is in any Physical Point; then either the whole Divine Essence does not exist without that Point, and then how is it every where? Or if it does exist without that Point; then the whole Divine Essence does exist without the whole Divine Essence.

Others, lastly, not knowing how to reconcile these Contradictions, or solve these Difficulties, have roundly deny'd that God is every where properly, and asserted that his Omnipresence is no real Attribute of God, but only an extrinsical Denomination, by

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which he is said to be present every where only upon the Account of his working every where.

But can any thing work every where; and not be every where; can any thing work where it is not?

Then for God's Omniscience, to omit other Particulars, what Work has been made about his Fore-knowledge of future Contingents, (*i. e.*) of such Things as depend upon free Agents, that have a Liberty of determining themselves to either Part of a Contradiction?

Because they knew not how to account for a Fore-knowledge that must be certain, of Events that are so contingent:

Some being unwilling to part with the Liberty of Man's Will, have given up the Prescience of God.

Others, as unwilling to part with the Doctrine of the Divine Prescience, have given up the Liberty of Man's Will, and Freedom of his Acting.

They both agree that such Contingents are not knowable.

The former therefore infer, that God does not foreknow them.

The latter teach, that God does foreknow them, but has to that end removed them from a State of Possibility, into a Condition

Futurition; from being such things as may be, to be such things as certainly shall be; (*i. e.*) that he might foreknow them, by his Decree pre-determined them, and made them not to be Contingents.

But have we not as many Demonstrations of the Error of the former, as we have Proofs in Scripture of future Contingents? If God has foretold, that such Events depend upon the freest Determinations of Man's Will, shall fall out so, or so, he must certainly foreknow them; for if he did not foreknow, how could he foretell them?

And have we not as many Arguments to prove the Mistake of the latter, as we have Laws and Precepts laid down in Scripture for the directing and governing of Moral Actions, and Rewards and Punishments assigned there for Obedience or Disobedience to those Laws? For if Men were not free Agents, or had no Power of determining their own Actions, they could not be either capable of doing Moral Good or Evil, or consequently Subjects of Rewards or Punishments for one or the other.

Leaving therefore these Attempts of vain Philosophy, vain then certainly, if ever so, when it puts Man upon *being wise above what is written* in Things pertaining to God, upon knowing more of him, than he has been

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pleased to discover of himself; let us go
beed to the more sure Word of Prophecy,
Revelations of Scripture, the only Light
shines, or can guide us in these dark En-
quiries.

And first, for his Omnipresence; let us
what God himself says of it by his Prophe-
Is. lxvi. ver. 1. *Thus saith the Lord, the Hea-
ven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Foot-
stool; and Jer. xxiii. ver. 24. Do not I fill
Heaven and Earth, saith the Lord?* Hea-
ven and Earth are frequently used in Scripture
signify the whole Universe, and all the Parts
of it. So Moses, speaking of the whole Crea-
tion, Gen. i. 1. says, *In the Beginning God
created the Heaven and the Earth;* that is
the whole World, and all the Creatures in
and in that Sense it is used by our Saviour
Mat. v. 18. *Till Heaven and Earth pass,*
till the whole Fabrick of the World be
solved. So then God declares of himself,
he fills All Places, and therefore cannot
be excluded from Any.

Again, the Prophet David, in the cxxxv
Psalm, cries out at the 7th Verse, *Whither
O Lord, shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither
shall I flee from thy Presence? Whither?*
I can go no where from thee, for if I as-
cend up into Heaven, thou art there; if I make
my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there; if I

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Wings of the Morning, and remain in the
furthest Parts of the Sea; even there shall thy
voice lead me; or, if I say the Darknes shall
overcome me, even the Night shall be light about
me. There is no Place so high or deep, or
remote or obscure, but thou, O God, art
present in it. To these Words of David,
I will add those of his Son Solomon, at the
Dedication of the Temple, 1 Kings viii. 27.
Will God indeed dwell on the Earth? Behold
Heaven, and Heaven of Heavens, cannot
contain thee. From all which, we learn thus
much concerning God's Omnipresence, that
he fills all Places, and yet is not compre-
hended in any. If any one ask how these
things can be, that he should be excluded
from no Place, and yet included in none? I
must answer with the Psalmist, in the Verse
immediately preceding those I lately quoted,
that such Knowledge is too wonderful for me;
and that I am too low, I cannot attain to it. The Manner
how is inexplicable by the Wit of Men;
but the Thing certain from the Word of God,
that he who is infinite and cannot be cir-
cumscribed, is so present every where, that
there is no Place, nor can any be conceived,
where he is not.

2. For God's Omniscience. And here,
without departing from the Guidance of the
Scripture, we may conclude, that his Know-

ledge, who is in every thing infinitely perfect, is very different, as all his Ways are from our imperfect one: That he does not know Things after our weak manner, being led by Discourse and Ratiocination from Things known, to Things unknown; but all Things are at once present to him; he sees and knows them all at one simple View as the Apostle speaks *Heb. iv. 13. All Things are naked and open to the Eyes of him to whom we have to do;*

All Events and Occurrences *wheresoever* they happen; for *Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?* Jer. xxiii. 23;

All, *whenever* they happen, not only present, and past, but future ones too; upon this Head God challenges the Gods of the Heathens, *Is. xli. 21, 22, 23. Prosecute your Cause, saith the Lord, bring forth your strong Reasons, --- let them bring forth and shew what shall happen, --- shew the Things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods;* and this Knowledge of future Things S. James ascribes to God, *Acts x. 18. Known to God are all his Works, from the beginning of the World;*

All, not only those of greater Consequence as the Changing of States, and Revolution of Governments; *He ruleth in the Kingdom*

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Men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, Dan. iv. 17. In which Prophecy he foretold the great Monarchies long before they were set up; but his Knowledge extends to the most inconsiderable Events; and minutest Things; *Not a Sparrow falls to the Ground without him, and the very Hairs of our Head are all numbered:*

And not only Natural Events, but whatever proceeds from Rational and Free Agents, he perfectly knows: *Can any Man hide himself in secret Places that I shall not see him, saith the Lord?* Jer. xxiii. 21. And as to the Actions of Men, David tells us Psal. lxxiii. 13, 15. *The Lord looks from Heaven, he beholds all the Sons of Men, ---- he considereth all their Works:* Nay, as to their Words and their very Thoughts, he says, Psalm lxxix. *There is not a Word in my Tongue but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether,* ver. 4. and ver. 2. *Thou, Lord, understandest my Thoughts afar off.* In short, all Things near or far off, past, present or future, even contingent Things, little or great, whether the Works of God, the Effects of Nature, the necessary Actions of Brutes, the free ones of Men, their Words and Thoughts, and whatever is knowable, they are all clearly open to one View to the Divine Omniscience. This may startle our poor Reason; but even
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That will tell us, that as to the Divine Perfections, it becomes us to admire what we cannot comprehend; and instead of searching curiously into this great Attribute, cry out with *S. Paul, Rom. 11. 33. 34. Of the Depth of the Riches of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out. For who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor?*

Now a hearty Assent to, or firm Belief of these two Attributes of God, that he is *So* every where present, that we cannot be anywhere, where he is not; that he *So* knows all things, that we can neither suffer, describe, speak, nor think any thing that he knows not, is the first thing imply'd in *setting God before us*.

2. The Second is a practical Consideration of these Attributes, or an Application of that Belief to the Government of our Lives: For this Faith, without it produces suitable Practice, will be so far from advantaging us, that it will aggravate our Sins, and make our Condemnation heavier than it would have been, if we had been ignorant of, or Infidels in those Attributes. To *set God before us* then is not only to believe that where-ever we are, we are in his Presence; but so to behave ourselves every where

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becomes that awful Presence; not only to believe that whatever we do is seen by him, but for that Reason, to endeavour, that whatever we do, may be approved by him; and how this may be done, we shall have Occasion to shew more particularly in the remaining Enquiries. The next whereof is,

2. Under what Notion of him we are to set **God** before us.

And here I shall consider **God** with relation,

1. To Moral Actions, and

2. To other Events.

I. In relation to Moral Actions, we are to consider **God**,

1. As an holy Law-giver, that has prescribed righteous and good Laws for the Government of them.

God is frequently represented in Scripture under the Notion of a Law-giver; *The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver*; says the Prophet, *Is. xxxiii. 22.* and, *There is one Law-giver that is able to save and destroy*, says *S. James, iv. 10.* Now **God** has prescribed Laws for the Government of our Lives two ways:

1. By imprinting in the Heart of Man the common Notices of Good and Evil in the first Creation of him, which shew him what is Honest, and what Dishonest; what is to be

be done, and what to be avoided. This is called the *Law of Nature*; and this S. Paul speaks of in the 2d Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, at the 14th Verse, *When the Gentiles which have not the Law, i. e. not the reveal'd Law, do yet by Nature the Things contain'd in the Law, these having not the Law, are a Law to themselves, which shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts* and this Law is sufficient both to convince the Transgressors of Sin, as it there follows *their Conscience also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts, their λογισμοι, their Reasonings with in them either accusing or excusing one another* and also that they deserve Death for it: For speaking of the same Gentiles, who had no other Law, he says at the 32d Verse of the 1st Chapter, *Who knowing the Judgment of God, that they which commit such Things, i. e. Things forbidden by this Law of Nature and right Reason, are worthy of Death.*

2. By raising up fit Persons, inspiring them with the Knowledge of his Will, sending them to discover it to Mankind, and empowering them to justify their Mission that they were sent by him; and what he has communicated to Men by the Instrumentality of such Prophets, is call'd, in an especial manner, his *Reveal'd Law*: And this we have

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the Books of the Old and New Testament; chiefly in the latter, wherein we have the last and most perfect Revelation of his Mind and Will, which he has made by our great Prophet, his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; who has perfected the *Moral Law*, and brought *Life and Immortality to Light*; who has explain'd it more clearly, extended its Authority and Directive Power more widely, and enforced its Obligation more strongly, than the former Revelations had done; clearing it from the false Glosses, with which the Scribes and Lawyers had obscured and defaced it, by subjecting the very Thoughts of the Heart to its Rule, and by giving its Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments in their due Light, both as to Quality and Duration: This is a *perfect Law* indeed, reaching to every thing in us that is capable of Moral Good or Evil; our Deeds, our Words, our very Thoughts: Requiring in all the greatest Sincerity and Purity, and proposing the most glorious Rewards to incite, and the most dreadful Punishments to fright us into Obedience.

1. In setting God before us, we must consider him as an exact and curious Observer of our Behaviour, with respect to his Laws; this is what is meant by those Expressions in Scripture, where he is said to *weigh, to ponder*

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der the Ways and Spirits, and Heart of Man
Prov. xvi. 2. All the Ways of a Man are cle
in his own Eyes; but the Lord weigheth
Spirits. And Chap. xxiv. 12. Does not he th
pondereth the Heart, consider it; and he th
keepeth the Soul, doth not he know it? Other
 Metaphors are used in Scripture, taken from
 the Practice of Men, in entering Things of
 Consequence, that they would not forget
 in Books: So the Spirit is pleased to con-
 descend to our Weakness, to shew that God
 does not only observe, but remember all our
 Actions of every Man, with their particular
 Circumstances. As to the vertuous Actions
 of good Men, the Prophet Malachi tells us
 Cap. iii. Verse 16. *They that feared the Lord*
spake often one to another, i.e. frequently con-
versed one another with Holy and Hea-
venly Conversation; And the Lord hearkened
and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance
was written before him, for them that feared
the Lord, and that thought upon his Name. At
 the same Metaphor is used in relation to our
 Sins of Men, where David begs of God
 Psal. li. to blot out his Transgressions, and
 when God promises his People Israel, N. 12
 25. that he will blot out their Transgressions
 and not remember their Sins. And in the
 Vision or Prophetical Description of the Last
 Judgment in the xxth of the Revelation
 where

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where S. John says, he saw the Dead, small and great, stand before the Throne of God, he tells us, that the Books were open'd, and that the Dead were judg'd out of those Things which were written in the Books, according to their Works.

3. Lastly, In setting God before us, we must consider him as a bountiful Rewarder of those that are obedient to him, and as a severe, but just Punisher, of such as are disobedient; for that he might be so, is the great Reason that he does so nicely watch, and take so strict Notice of the Actions, and even the Thoughts of all Men. This he tells us by the Prophet Jer. xvii. 10. I, the Lord search the Heart, I try the Reins, to what End? Why, even to give to every Man according to his Ways, and according to the fruit of his Doings: And this the Apostle assures us in Rom. ii. 5, &c. he will do at the Day of the Revelation of the righteous Judgement of God, when he will render to every Man according to his Deeds; to them, who by patient Continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory and Honour, and Immortality, Eternal Life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil; but Glory, Honour and Peace, to every Man that worketh

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worketh Good. And now you see, und
what Notion of him, we are to *set God*
fore us, in relation to Moral Actions:

1. As an holy Law-giver.
2. As a curious Observer of our Beh
viour with respect to his Laws. An
3. As a bountiful Rewarder of the Ob
dient, and a severe, but just Punish
of the Disobedient.

2. In relation to other Events, in *settling*
him before us, we must consider him as the
wise Orderer and Disposer of them, and
that none of them are the Effects of blind
Chance, or fatal Necessity, but all the Re
sults of his wise Counsel; that every thing
that befalls us, or any of his Creatures, is by
his Appointment or Permission; who direct
governs, and disposes all Occurrences to the
greatest and best Ends, his own Glory, and
the Good of those that love and serve him.

The only remaining Particular to be ex
plain'd, is,

3. How *we must set God* always *before us*
By which is not meant, that we must think
upon these Attributes of God's Omnipresence
and Omniscience every Moment of our Lives
and actually apply our Belief of them to
every the minutest, and most indifferen
Action of them: But it is,

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To live under such an habitual Sense of those his glorious Perfections, as may influence the general Conduct of our Lives, and govern all our Actions of greater Consequence, those that are matter of Sin or Duty: But because Habits are neither got or preserved without repeated Acts; in order to obtain, and keep up in us such an habitual Sense of God's Omnipresence and Omnipotence, it will be necessary to fix some certain and stated Times (besides the occasional ones which I shall mention by and by) for an actual Consideration of them.

And surely, once in the Return of every day, cannot be thought too often, even by those, whose strait Circumstances, and mean employments, make their daily Labour little enough for the necessary Support of themselves and their Families; they, methinks, cannot grudge half an Hour in the four and twenty to be spent in this great Business: But how can they excuse themselves from it, whom their bountiful God has placed in a Condition, beyond the Necessity, not only of Labouring, but even of taking Thought for what they shall Eat, or what they shall Drink, or wherewithal they shall be Cloathed? (tho' God knows, too many hardly employ their Thoughts to any better Purposes) Can they pretend they cannot afford such a Pittance of
S their

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their Time for this Employment? And were this small Proportion but wisely and honestly laid out in it by all of us, I venture to say, we should see another Face of Things than we now do.

That Part of the Day, which I should think would be most properly and usefully assigned for this Purpose, is the Morning when we first wake; not only for the Fitness and Congruity of the Thing, (as certainly is very fit and congruous, that when God preserved us whilst we slept, he should be the first Object of our waking Thoughts) That when he, as *David* expresses it, *been about our Bed* all Night, we should entertain a Conversation with him, before others are admitted, who come in the Morning upon Business or Compliment:) Especially, for the good Influence it may have upon our whole Demeanure the Day after. If by serious Contemplation in the Morning we make a deep Impression upon our Minds of God's Omnipresence and Omniscience, will hardly be wore out before Night; and if we do this every Morning, 'tis the likely way to beget and maintain in us an habitual Sense of them: But besides living under a habitual Sense of these Attributes of God,

2. To set God before us *always*, is as usual to apply our Belief of them in special

Cases

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And those I take to be chiefly these

In time of Temptation, whether from Pleasure and Advantage the Sin will give, or from the Difficulties and Dangers a Duty expose us to.

In time of Divine Worship; And, In all remarkable Events that happen to us, whether Adverse or Prosperous.

In case of Temptation to Sin, it is to consider that God, who by his Laws has forbidden the thing I am tempted to, under the strict Penalty, is now present with me, and sees whether I comply with the Temptation or not; that he will eternally reward me if I do not, and everlastingly punish me if I do.

In time of Divine Worship, whether in the Closet, and there it is to consider, that though the Door be shut, yet God is not excluded; and however I am retired, my Father which is in Heaven sees in secret, even my mental Prayers enter into his Eyes, and the Motions of my Heart are open to his Eyes; or publick in the Church, and it is to consider that God is in a more special manner present in the Assembly of the faithful, that he knows out of what Principles, and for what Purposes every one comes, whether out of Obedience to his

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Commands, and in Hopes of his Blessing, whether out of Curiosity, Custom, Formality, Vain-Glory, or for worse Purposes, that he beholds our Behaviours, and whether our Hearts go along with our Prayers, or whether we offer him only a Lip-Service; whether we attend to his Word, and receive it in the Love of it in order to practise it, or whether we sleep or talk at the Time, in which his Ambassadors are delivering their Errand to us; Or at best forgetful Hearers of it, deceiving our Souls; whether we approach his holy Altar out of Love to our Saviour, and in grateful Remembrance of his Sufferings for us, which are there exhibited to us, out of a Sense of our own Sins and Wants, in hopes to receive Pardon for one, and a Supply for the other at the Hands of our Merciful God; or out of base Designs and worldly Considerations, thereby prostituting the Ordinance of God to the Service of *Mammon*.

3. In all remarkable Events that happen to us, whether Adverse or Prosperous. In Time of Adversity it is to consider, that *Afflictions arise not out of the Dust*, but come upon us by the Appointment or Permission of God, who sees my present Condition, knows my Strength, and perfectly understands what is best for me, who is present with me,

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deliver me out of it, or support me upright, and direct the Issue to my greatest Advantage: In time of Prosperity, when I have received any Eminent, whether Deliverance or Positive Blessings, it is to look above self and Causes, up to God as the Author, therefore it is to reflect, that he that has bestow'd Mercies upon me, sees how I use them, whether I employ them to his Glory who bestows them, or in the Service of his Enemies.

And thus, by living under such an habitual sense of God's Omnipresence and Omniscience, as may influence the general Conduct of our Lives, especially our Actions of greater consequence, such as are Matters of Sin and Duty; and by particular Application of our hearts to those Attributes, to the especial Cases of Temptation, of Divine Worship, and in remarkable Events, whether Adverse or Prosperous, that happen to us, we may discharge the great Duty, which David praescribed in the Text, of setting God always before us.

It now only remains that I recommend the Pattern he has set to your Imitation; methinks I cannot have much to do upon this Head. You cannot but infer from what has been already said, the blessed Influence that this Practice would have upon

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you, not only in the fore-mention'd C
but in all Conditions and Circumstance
Life.

What Temptations of Pleasure or
vantage can prevail with a Man to com
a Sin, who knows and considers, that he
not do it but in the Presence and Sight
his Judge, who has strictly forbidden it,
will eternally damn him for it? This be
that poor Encouragement to comply w
Temptation, that Privacy offers. In
does the Adulterer watch for the Twi
to execute his filthy Purposes; in vain
the Riotous choole the Night for his
bauches; in vain does any Sinner seek
the remotest and darkest Corner for t
his Villanies in. By such Methods indee
may hide his Sins from the Sight and K
ledge of Men; but alas! what will that
him, when whatever he does, *in Day*
and in the Closet, is as open to God, as
had been done at Noon-Day, or *on the H*
Top?

What a Fool does this shew him t
who being restrain'd by Shame or Fear
some worldly Consideration from the
ward Acts, will yet venture to gratify
wicked Faney, by indulging Lustful, C
tious, Revengeful, or any wicked Thoug

setting GOD always before us. 263

When God as clearly sees his Heart, as he does the Actions that proceed from it?

What Difficulties or Dangers can hinder or affright that Man from his Duty, that lives under the Sense and Influence of this Faith? Oppositions we must expect to meet with in our Christian Life; we are not only to strive, and to run, but *to wrestle and fight*, not only against *Flesh and Blood*, but against *Principalities*, and against *Powers*, against the *Rulers of the Darkness of this World*, against *Spiritual Wickedness in high Places*, against the *Corruptions of our own Nature*, the *Malice of wicked Men*, and the *Power of evil Spirits*. But let these Enemies be as numerous, and powerful, and malicious as they can, yet he cannot want Encouragement to engage them, that sets God always before him. For what can more animate a brave Soldier, than to fight in the Sight of his Prince or General, who will be sure to take Notice of those that distinguish themselves, and reward them with particular Marks of his Favour? How then must the *Soldier of Christ* be encouraged in all his Conflicts with his *Spiritual Enemies*; how must he be excited, *to fight the good Fight*, by this Consideration, that the *Captain of his Salvation* stands by him, not only to see how he behaves himself, but to strengthen

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and support, to help him to overcome, and then to bestow upon him *the Crown of Life*.

How constant, reverent and devout, would this Faith make a Man in the Worship of God? He would not dare to neglect the Duties of the Cloſet, at least the offering up of a Morning and Evening Sacrifice to him no more than he would to employ that Time which is set apart for the Publick Service, in secular and sinful Uses. Would he, that considers that God sees him where-ever he is, dare sacrilegiously to rob him of the Day which is consecrated to his more immediate Service, and of the Attendance he should pay him on it in his own House, making it (no Necessity so requiring) a Day for Journeys and Business, a Day of Recreations and vain Diversions? Or if he come to the Place of Publick Worship, would he dare to rush into that more immediate Presence of the great God, with as little Consideration, as *the Horse rushes into the Battle*. To behave himself there with less Reverence and Decency, than he would in the Sight of his Prince, or of any great and venerable Man; or if some Temporal Respects make his outward Demeanure more grave and compos'd, would he dare to let his Heart wandring after his *Mammon*, or his Pleasures, his Mind be taken up with his Worldly

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or lewd Intrigues? No, he that knows
himself to be every where under the All-
seeing Eye of God, will be as punctual to
Returns of the Hours for the Devotions
in the Closet, where only his Father sees in
secret, as of the Times for the Publick Wor-
ship of him in the great Congregation: He will
bow to his Feet, as the Wise Man expresses it,
when he goes to the House of God; he will pre-
pare his Heart before he comes thither, and
submit both That and his Body too, when he
is there; order the inward Motions of one,
and the outward Gestures of the other, so
that he may present both, his whole Man,
a holy Sacrifice acceptable unto God.
In time of Adversity, what a Comfort is
it to reflect, that all a Man's Wants and
Troubles are seen and known by him, who
is able to supply and relieve him, and willing
to do so, if he sees it best for him: That how-
ever soever the Cup he is to drink of may
be sent to him, yet the Draught is of his Hea-
venly Father's mixing, who never afflicts his
Children willingly, but always for their Good,
who perfectly understands both his Weak-
nesses, and the Strength of the Potion, and
will so far abate of this, or supply the other
by the Aid of his Grace, that it shall work
for his Good, and the Affliction, tho' for the
present it may not seem joyous, but grievous,
shall

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shall afterwards yield him the peaceable Fruit
of Righteousness.

In time of Prosperity, what a powerful Antidote is this Faith and Consideration against all the Dangers of that State? Is Man's *Lot fallen in a fair Ground, has he a goodly Heritage, does his Cup overflow, is he laden with Honours, raised to Posts of Power?* Why, he who believes and considers that God, who bestows upon him these Blessings, or rather entrusts him with these Talents, is every where with him, and sees how he employs them, will he dare to abuse them to other Purposes than those God designs'd them for? No surely. Were the rich Man thoroughly convinced, and would he think upon it, that God, who gave him his Riches to this end, *that he might be rich in good Works,* always sees him, and observe what Use he makes of them, and will reckon with him for them; he would not either miserably hoard them up, and let them lie useless by him, or extravagantly squander them away in Vanity, Excess, and Riot; but having made a competent Provision for his Family, he would make his own Life comfortable, by a moderate and thankful Enjoyment of a Portion of them, and give himself the much truer Pleasure, and more solid Satisfaction, in relieving the Necessitous, and

making

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making glad the Heart of the Poor, and doing all the Good he can, by a chearful and prudent Distribution of the rest. Did the Man distinguish'd by great Titles and Characters, whom his Lord has *bid to sit up higher*, placed him in a Rank above the common Level of Mankind; did he believe and consider himself always in the Presence of that glorious Being, who is exalted infinitely more above him, than he is above the meanest of his Brethren, and who *also has made him to differ from the rest*, would he suffer his Advancements to minister to his Pride and Vain-Glory? Would the poor Bubble swell with Air till 'tis ready to crack, would he look down with Scorn and Contempt upon his Inferiours? No, he would cry out with *Job*, *Mine Eye seeth thee, O Lord, wherefore I abhor myself in Dust and Ashes*; he would answer the Designs of Providence in advancing him so high, by rendring the Beauty of Vertue and Piety more conspicuous by his practising of them, and by recommending the Practice of them more forcibly to those under him, by the Influence of his Example and Authority. Did the Man of Power consider himself always in the Sight and Hands of that Almighty Being, who gave him his Power, and expects he should employ it to the same just and good Purposes that he does
his

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his own, he would not abuse it to countenance Violence and Injustice, and to trample down Innocence and Right, but he would make use of it, *To deliver the Oppressed from him that spoileth him, to bring down the high Looks of the Proud, and to punish the wrong Doer.* And by thus guarding him against the sinful Abuses of his Prosperity, this Faith and Consideration effectually secure a Man from those Stings and Horrors, with which his guilty Reflections upon such Abuses would have disturb'd his Enjoyment of it, and by engaging him to employ it to the excellent Purposes for which it was given him, afford him the just Relish of it at present, and a reasonable Hope of God's continuing it to him for the future.

In short, this Practice would direct a Man wisely in the whole Conduct of his moral Life, and carry him with Ease and Cheerfulness through all the Passages of the natural One: This lays the only solid Foundation, for that which alone can recommend our Behaviour to God in the one, and for our true Quiet and Comfort in the other.

That which alone can render our Labour and Services pleasing to God, and which he accepts of instead of Perfection, is Integrity and Sincerity: But what can make us Honest and Sincere, and without Hypocrisy in our

whole

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whole Behaviour, towards God, our Neighbour, and ourselves, in all our Deeds, Words and Thoughts, if the Belief and Consideration that they cannot be hid from, but are all naked and open to God, cannot?

That which of all things, next to the Guilt of Sin, makes Men's Lives uneasy and troublesome, is their too eager Concern and Solitude for the obtaining or securing the Things of this World: But surely this Practice, if any thing, would cure that restless Solitude, and make us to be, as the Apostle advises, *without Carefulness*: By which I don't mean that it would, or should make a Man neglect the Duties of his particular Calling, or those honest Methods, which God allows him to use for the obtaining, not only the Necessaries, but the Conveniences and Comforts of Life; but it will teach him, after having used his own lawful Endeavours for those Purposes, not to disquiet himself about the Success of them, but to refer that entirely to God, who alone directs or permits all Events; and whatever Issue he shall be pleas'd to give, humbly to acquiesce in, and approve of it, as knowing that he perfectly understands his Circumstances, and is better able to choose for him, than he is to choose for himself.

What

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What Abundance of Solicitude and Fear does he discharge himself of, that can cast himself and all his Care upon the Almighty God, who he knows is always with him and cares for him? His Days are not distracted by anxious Thoughts, nor his Nights disturb'd with uneasy Fears; *he walks before God in Security all Day, and lays himself down in great Peace at Night, being assured that God, who is about his Bed, makes him dwell in Safety while he is taking his Rest.*

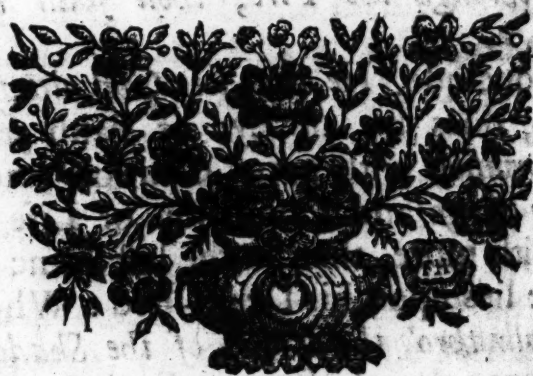
In all Times and Places, and upon all Occasions, he has free Access to God, lays open his Infirmities, his Wants, his Pressures to him; and by a faithful Application of the Promises of Scripture to himself, (in which he does as assuredly believe God speaks to him, as if one from the Dead, or an Angel from Heaven, had brought the Message) he comforts and supports himself under, or rather exults and triumphs over them. Is he perplex'd with Difficulties, out of which he knows not how to extricate himself, at a loss which way to turn, or what to do? he applies to himself that Promise of David *Commit thy Way to the Lord, and he shall bring it to pass.* Is he under a Temptation that seems too weighty for him? he applies to himself the Words of God to S. Paul *My Grace is sufficient for thee, my Strength*

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perfect in Weakness. Is he surrounded with dangers that threaten every thing that he values and loves, even his Life? he applies to himself what God says to his People Israel, by the Prophet *Isaiah*, *Fear not, thou Jacob, for I am with thee; be not dismay'd, I will strengthen, I will help thee, I will uphold thee with the Right Hand of Righteousness; when thou passest through the Water, I will be with thee; and when thou walkest through the Fire, thou shalt not be burnt.*

To conclude, He that sets God always before him, does by an Eye of Faith see him that is invisible with great Comfort and Joy in every Stage and Condition of Life; but more with more, than in the last Scene of it, when he lies upon his Death-Bed: When he is to walk thro' the Valley of the Shadow of Death, even then he fears no Evil, for he sees God with him, to make his Bed in his Sickness; with him, to support him under the Pains of his Distemper and Decays of his Body, with the bright Manifestations of his Presence, and ravishing Discoveries of his Love; with him, to guard him against the Attempts of the Powers of Darkness; with him, to strengthen him in his last Conflict, to receive his Spirit into his Hands, to make

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make his Flesh rest in Hope, and finally
raise his Body from the Grave, and re-un-
ite it to his Soul, to dwell together in his Pre-
sence, where is the Fulness of Joy, and
whose Right Hand are Pleasures for ever-
more.



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SERMON preached before the
QUEEN at the Cathedral Church
of S^t Paul, on *May 1. 1707.* Being
the Day appointed by Her Majesty
for a *General Thanksgiving* for the
Happy UNION of the Two
Kingdoms of *England and Scotland.*

PSALM CXXXIII.

*Hold! How good, and how pleasant it is
for Brethren to dwell together in Unity.*

*is like the precious Ointment upon the Head,
that ran down upon the Beard, even Aaron's
Beard, that went down to the Skirts of his
Garments.*

*the Dew of Hermon, and as the Dew that
descended upon the Mountains of Zion, for
there the Lord commanded the Blessing, even
Life for evermore.*

T HIS Psalm is a lively Description
of the happy Condition of that
Kingdom or People that dwell to-
gether in Unity.

For Brethren, in *Verse 1.* are not to be
taken strictly for Children descended im-
mediately

mediately from the same Natural Parent nor for such Relations as are descended mediately from one Stock, either in equal Degrees, as Cousins, or unequal, as Uncles and Nephews, who are frequently styled Brethren in Scripture; but for Members of one Civil Society, Subjects of a Kingdom who have the same Political Parent.

The Unity of such, if it be complete will imply these Four Things:

- I. An Union in Judgment and Opinion.
- II. An Union of Hearts and Affections.
- III. An Union of Interests; and,
- IV. An Union of Endeavours to promote the Common Good.

And this Union is here said to be
A Good or Profitable Thing, and
A Pleasant or Joyful Thing.

In the following Verses, the Profit and Joy which result from this Unity, are elegantly set forth by two Similitudes; in which however there have been some Pains taken to find or make Difficulties, yet the Design of them is very apparent, and so is the Pertinency, to the Ends for which they were intended.

The Pleasure or Joy that arises from this Unity, is compared to the *Precious Ointment upon the Head, that ran down upon the Beard even Aaron's Beard, that went down to the*

Skirt

Skirts of his Cloathing. This precious Ointment was a Composition made by God's own Direction, of the principal Aromatick Spices, and Oil Olive, *Exod. xxx. 23.*

The Odour of rich Ointments poured forth is very grateful, it delights and comforts: And Oil is said to *make a Man a cheerful Countenance, or to make his Face to shine, Psal. civ. 15.* And it is called Oil of Gladness, *Psal. xlv. 7.* and therefore the Metaphor does very aptly express great Pleasure and Joy: And as for the Ointment's going down to the Skirts of Aaron's Garment; whether by Skirts are meant the Collar of the Blue Robe of the Ephod, *Exod. xxxix. 23.* which the Original will bear, and the Translation of the Septuagint enclines to, or any other Part of the Garment: The Trickling down of the Ointment from the Head to the Garment, fitly denotes the Diffusiveness of this Joy, that it rests not on the principal parts only, but descends, is communicated to the inferior Members of the Society.

The other Advantage, the Profit and Prosperity of a Body so united, is represented by the Dew of Hermon that descended upon the Mountains of Zion: And as for the Difficulty commonly started here, how the Dew of Hermon, which is on the other side of Jordan, should fall upon Mount Zion at Jerusalem,

salem, one being on the East, the other on the West side of *Canaan*, it answers itself. For if *Zion* at *Jerusalem* be at too great Distance from *Hermon* for such a Communication, 'tis certain, that either some other Place, called *Zion*, must be here meant, else the *Dew of Hermon* must not be taken properly, but figuratively, for a rich Dew and Plenty of it; such as that which comes from *Hermon* on the Pastures of *Bashan*, made them so fertile, and famous for tending Cattle, as they are represented in Scriptures: And then the plain Meaning the *Simile* is this, that as Snow melting and falling from high Hills, or Vapours which have been exhaled, form'd into Clouds in the Air, and hang on the Tops of Mountains, dissolving into Showers of Rain, fresh the lower Hills and adjacent Countries on which they fall, enrich and make them fruitful; so this *Unity* among *Brethren*, that which promotes the Plenty and Prosperity, the thriving, flourishing Condition of any Society.

But to crown and perfect the Happiness of such a Body, it follows that the Blessing of God will attend upon them: For there, is, among Brethren so united, the Lord commanded the Blessing; he has spoken, and it shall come to pass, even Life for ever.

implies all the good Things that the
ject, to which it is promis'd, is capable
And Bodies and Societies of Men being
stituted for this World only, and having
Place in the next; *Life*, with relation to
h, imports every thing that can make them
py here; and the Words *for evermore*, as-
the Duration of that Happiness, while
y continue so united.

From this short Account of the *Psalm*,
a may please to observe, what was the
sign of the Holy Pen-man in composing
Scripture, and must be mine in my Dis-
se upon it; namely, to shew,

That a hearty Union of the Members of
Society, or Body Politick, has a natural
endency to procure their Prosperity and
y, and does likewise entitle them to the
ine Favour and Blessing:

Which I shall endeavour in my Applica-
to accommodate to the great Occasion
our present Meeting, by representing,

1. Some of the glorious Advantages;
hich the Union of the Two Kingdoms, for
hich we are this Day praising God, does of
self seem to promise.

2. The reasonable Grounds we have to
pe for God's Blessing upon it, provided

3. We will be perswaded to do that which
our Duty:

First, To pay our Tribute of Praise and Thanksgiving to God, the great Author of this blessed Work, and to make our grateful Acknowledgments to those under his Hands who have been the happy Instruments in bringing it about.

Secondly, To pursue the true and only Means on our Parts of making the Union lasting, and reaping the desired Fruits of which are to serve God faithfully, and love one another sincerely.

I. I am to shew, that a hearty Union among the Members of any Society, or Body Politick, has a natural Tendency to procure their Prosperity and Joy, and does likewise entitle them to the Divine Favour and Blessing.

This Unity, as I observed before, implies several Things.

1. The first is an Union of Judgment and Opinion: This is that which *S. Paul* means by his τὸ αὐτὸ Φρονεῖν, which he so frequently and earnestly presses upon those he writes. *That they would be like-minded, of the same Mind, of one Mind, perfectly joined together in the same Mind and the same Judgment.* And it is observable, that where the Apostle gives this Advice, it is generally preparatory either to an Exhortation to Peace, as 2 Cor. xiii. 11. *Be of one Mind, live in Peace; and*

Ro

for the Happy Union.

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Rom. xii. 16. *Be of the same Mind, --- and if it be possible, as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all Men :* Or to a Dehortation from Strife and Selfishness; so Phil. ii. 2. *That ye be like-minded --- of one Mind :* And then follows, *Let nothing be done through Strife and vain-Glory; and, look not every one at his own Things, but every Man also at the Things of another :* And 1 Cor. i. 10. *I beseech you speak the same thing, that there be no Division among you.*

And it must be acknowledged, that Union, or Difference in Judgment and Opinion, has a Tendency to promote the Quiet, or occasion the Disturbance of any Society.

But it must not be thought, that by this Union of Judgment, is meant such a perfect Agreement in Opinion, as to exclude all Difference: That is neither possible in this imperfect State, nor necessary. In Matters of small Consequence, in Things indifferent, or in speculative Subjects, wise and good Men may differ, without Prejudice to themselves, to each other, or to the Publick: But it is in Matters of greater Weight, that relate to the Civil or Ecclesiastical Polity, where the Welfare of the Publick is concern'd, that this Union is to be preserved.

Though even in those Matters, an Universal Harmony in Judgment among all the Members

Members of any Society, is a Thing to be wished rather than hoped for.

And if Men would advance no Novelty nor raise any Disputes out of Affectation Vain-Glory, Interest, or other base Principles if they would not maintain them with Obstinacy, and a Resolution not to be convinced if none would nicely sift and examine things established by Publick Authority, only to find Fault, and matter for Objection; if they would sincerely endeavour to conform their Sentiments to those of their Superiors, as far as they can, without offending God, and wounding their own Consciences :

If where there are Differences, those that are on the side of Authority, would treat those that differ from them with Gentleness and Tenderness, *in Meekness instructing them to oppose*, using all kind and Christian Methods to convince and restore them, and waiting with Patience till God shall give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth :

If the others would lay aside all Prejudices, and honestly dispose themselves to own and submit to a Conviction when it shall be offered them; if they would impartially consider what has been, or may be said on the other side of the Question, and humbly beg of God for the Assistance of his Spirit, to enlighten their Minds, and guide them

them into the Truth: if whereunto *they have*
 or shall have *attain'd*, they would walk by
the same Rule, and mind the same Things, and
 agree as far as they can: If after having sin-
 cerely sought and laboured for Satisfaction to
 their Objections, and done all that becomes
 modest and conscientious Enquirers after
 Truth, they shall still differ in some Things;
 if they yet dissent with Modesty and Sobriety,
 if they keep their Scruples as much as they
 can to themselves, and suffer not their pri-
 vate Opinions to give Disturbance to the Pub-
 lick: In short, if these would not judge the
 other, nor the other *despise* these, this is, for
 ought I see, as great an Union in Judgment
 and Opinion, as can be expected; till that
 blessed Scene shall open, of a *new Heaven*
 and a *new Earth*, which we look for according
 to the Promise of our Lord, wherein will dwell
 Light and Knowledge, as well as Righteous-
 ness.

2. The second Thing imply'd in this
 Unity among Brethren, is an Union of Af-
 fections; whereby they are tenderly enclin'd
 to each other, and being incorporated in one
 Civil Society, the several Members of it have
 the same kind Regard, Care, and Concern
 for, and mutual Sympathy with one another,
 as the Members of the Natural Body have.

They wish well to one another, bear one
 another's Burdens, feel one another's Hurts,
 rejoice

rejoice in one another's Good, and discharge to each other all Charitable Offices of Advice, Succour, and Comfort.

The other Union, that of Judgment and Opinion, the Scriptures suppose may not ways be even among Christians, and give Direction for the Behaviour of the different Parties, both the Strong and Weak, towards one another: But as for this of Affection there is no Dispensation for the Want of this must be had, where the other cannot obtain'd; and there can be no Reason sign'd why it may not.

If, after we have used our best Endeavour for Information in any material Point, my Brother and I should think differently of it, I have no more Reason to be angry with him than he has to be so with me; nor either of us any more to quarrel for that Difference of Opinion, than for the Difference that may be in our Features and Complexions.

Every rational and good Man will consider, that the greatest and most enlightened Person *knows here but in part, and sees thro' the Glass darkly*; and therefore, how assuredly soever he may think himself in the Right in any Dispute, and those that oppose him in the Wrong, yet he will rather pick quarrels than fall out with them; and manage all Controversies

overlies with his Brethren, as *Cicero* did his difference of Opinion with *Cato*, who says, he so dissented from him, that, though they were divided in Judgment, they remained only united in Love and Friendship.

3. The third Thing imply'd in this Unity among Brethren, is an Union of Interests; whereby they look upon themselves as joint traders, tho' not in equal Shares, in one common Stock; or as having their Effects embarked on one and the same Bottom, upon the Safety and Prosperity whereof, the Advantage of every Individual does depend. They know, if the Vessel miscarry, their All is lost; and therefore, whatever separate Interests any of them may have, they will not suffer them to come in Competition with the Welfare of the Community; but when both cannot be provided for, those shall always be postponed to these; and when the Safety of the Publick shall require them, their Lands and Purses are chearfully employ'd, and their Estates and Lives well and wisely hazarded in its Service.

4. The last Thing imply'd in this Unity among Brethren, is an Union of Endeavours to promote and carry on the Publick Good. None of them excuse themselves from their Share of the Work, but each affords his helping Hand towards it; some move in higher Spheres,

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Spheres, and some in lower, but every one useful in his proper Place.

All have not the same Capacities and Abilities, nor the same Offices and Stations; each must take Care, that he does not by rash Attempts, or any Excentrical Motions, disturb the Business, and endanger the Safety of the Society, instead of promoting its Service. The Organs and Members of the Body Natural have particular Uses allotted them by Providence; and if any invade those of the other Members, they are hurtful rather than serviceable; the Eye cannot judge of Sounds, nor the Ear of Colours; a Man would walk but untowardly upon his Hands, and the Offices of the Hands would be as awkwardly performed by the Feet. It is so in the Politick: If Mens indiscreet Zeal should carry them to meddle out of their proper Business, to engage in Undertakings which they are neither qualified for by Nature, nor called to by Providence; such disorderly Proceedings must break the Unity, and interrupt that beautiful Harmony, in which the Endeavours of the several Members should conspire for the Good of the whole, which can never be preserved, but by their keeping within their respective Stations, and acting there with Industry, Honesty and Prudence; and when they do so, they are

serv

viceable to the Publick; and there are
one of them so mean and inferior, or, to
the Apostle's Words, so *feeble, uncomely,*
less honourable, that the rest can say, *they*
no need of them; but the lowest Me-
anick, the meanest Artificer or Day-La-
bourer, that are occupy'd in the homeliest
and poorest honest Employments, and dili-
gent in them, do contribute to the Common
Welfare.

And it is by this orderly Walking of the
Members, when they do not go out of their
Lanes, or interfere with others, but confi-
ne themselves to their respective Limits,
they attentively *mind their own Business*, and
faithfully discharge the Duties of their pro-
per Places, that the Service and Interest of
the whole Body is most successfully carry'd
on.

Now, when the Members of any King-
dom or Nation are thus united in these several
particulars; when they agree in Judgment
and Opinion, or in mutual Forbearance
where they differ; when they are join'd in
Heart and Affection; when they have one
Common Interest, preferable to all private
Respects; and when All, in their several Ca-
pacities and Callings, contribute their joint
endeavours to promote the Advantage of
the Community; this must have a Natural
Tendency to procure the Prosperity of such
People.

Riches

Riches and Plenty at home, and Safety from Enemies abroad, must be the happy Consequences of it.

Here is Encouragement for Diligence and Application to Business in Men's particular Callings; here are none of those Avocations from them, or Interruptions to them, which are the certain Effects of Factions and Divisions in a Nation.

Where there are Parties, they bestow much of their Time and Labour in projecting and executing Methods for the Advancement of their respective Divisions, that there is little left for more honest and useful Employments: They are upon such a constant Watch and Guard against the opposite Party, that if any do undertake things that might turn to better Account, they are forced to stop work, as *Nehemiah's* Men did in building the Walls of *Jerusalem*, with a Trowel in one Hand, and a Sword in the other; and no wonder then if the Business goes but slowly on.

But where this *Unity among Brethren* takes Place, there need none of these Political Schemes and Contrivances; every one's Business is plainly chalk'd out in the Station wherein he is placed, and none need to disturb themselves with anxious Fears, and cautious Watches: There are none to quarrel again

in it, where each wishes as well to another
to himself: Every one may pursue his
work with Chearfulness, being assured of
reasonable Assistance in it from his Bre-
men, who have the same great End in view
he has, the Common Good; and will re-
in every thing that tends to promote it,
whomsoever it is perform'd.

In such a State, Ingenuity and Industry,
useful Inventions for the Improvement of
Natural Productions, or proper Manufac-
tures of a Country, and for the Advance-
ment of Trade and Commerce, will flourish;
consequently, which are the Natural Re-
sults of these, Wealth, and such an Abun-
dance of all things necessary and good, as
make such a People the Wonder and En-
vy of their Neighbours.

But this very Unity, which makes them the
Objects of their Neighbours Envy, secures
them from all Ill, or dangerous Effects of it.
In such an united compacted Kingdom, there
is no room for the artful Management of a
Domestic Enemy. Here are no Parties to be
encouraged and oppressed by Turns, and
brought against one another to the weakning
of the whole. Gifts and Pensions to corrupt
Ministers, and bribe Officers to betray their
Trusts, are offered in vain; where such a Pub-
lic Spirit prevails, as despises all private
Gain

Gain and Advantage, in comparison of Honour and Prosperity of the Community. And as little Encouragement has an Enemy to try his open Force, as his secret Policy against a Body so Rich and Flourishing, inspired with such Generous and Noble Principles, engaged in so glorious a Cause as the Good of their Country, and so closely and firmly united in the Defence of it. Surely there is no Enchantment against such a People when they couch, when they lie down as a Lion, and as a great Lion, who shall stir them up.

And as Prosperity is a genuine Effect of such Unity among Brethren, so is Joy and Pleasure too; and if any one doubts of this, he must question, whether Jealousies, Fears, Malice and Hatred, Envy and Rival Nature, continual Jars and Broils, which may be some of the Torments of Hell itself; Peace and Security, Love and Friendship, universal Harmony and Good-Will, the Employments of the Blessed Above, and so the Ingredients of their Happiness, afford a truer Joy and Pleasure.

And no wonder that the Practice of Duty does bring such a Heaven upon Earth, since it entitles those that practise it to the Blessing of God, which is the Crown and Perfection of the Happiness of such a People.

We are made by Nature sociable Creatures, form'd for Society; and therefore must be under Obligations from Nature to every thing that may promote the Ends of Society; which nothing can so effectually as that Unity of which I have been speaking.

This is a Duty enjoin'd by the Prophets of the Old Testament, and by our Lord and Apostles in the New; nay, God does not only command Brethren to be united, but makes them to be so, for *he makes Men to be of one Mind in a House*. And so far as we are endeavouring to promote Peace and Unity, we resemble God, as Children do a Parent; so says *Christ of the Peace-makers, they shall be called the Children of God*. And while Men are doing what God has commanded by the natural and revealed Law, doing what he does, and so are *Follower, Imitators, of him as dear Children*, they may safely conclude themselves entitled to their Heavenly Father's Blessing; for *the Lord commanded the Blessing, even for evermore*.

And now, may I not apply myself to you, the Words of our blessed Saviour, and say, *Is this Scripture fulfill'd in your Day?*

U

Did

Did *David* compose this *Psalms*, as is very probable, on Occasion of the Tribes *Israel* coming up to *Hebron*, and anointing him King over *Israel*, as the Men of *Judah* had anointed him King over *Judah*, several Years and a half before?

And do not we this Day see two Kingdoms incorporated in one, under one Sovereign, and one Legislature; to continue so, as we hope and trust, not as *Judah* and *Israel* did, only for the then present Reason, and that immediately following, and which was again divided in the third, but for all succeeding Generations?

How good and pleasant this Union is, may appear from the Miseries which both did suffer, when they were independent Kingdoms under different Sovereignities; and must be felt again, should they have been again divided.

The continual Dissentions and Feuds between them, particularly in the Reigns of three of our *Edwards*, and which were quite suppress'd in less than three hundred Years; the frequent Incurfions they made into each other's Country, ravaging, burning and destroying whatever came in the way; that Deluge of Blood of Nobles and others of both Nations, that was shed in many Skirmishes and Battles; besides the dreadful

headful ones at *Bannocks-Bourn*, *Hatfield*, *Marston-hill*, and *Flodden-Fields*; ungrateful Names! which our *Chronicles* are full of, may give us a dismal, but just View, of what must again have been the Consequences of two independent Sovereignties in the same Island; especially when the ancient Enemies of one, and Allies of the other, would not have fail'd to have improved the advantageous Opportunity of carrying on their own ambitious Designs to the Ruin of both.

The least Mischief of such a Separation (and sure that is great enough) must have been the keeping up of Standing Armies, to man the Garrisons, and Guard the Frontiers on both sides: But in all Probability, the whole Island must have become a Seat of War, a Scene of Confusion, Blood and Devastation. How good then is this Union!

For now Ephraim shall no longer envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim; their old Contentions and Animosities shall cease; and being entirely united, they shall fly upon the Shoulders of the Philistines; they shall quickly subdue their Common Enemies, and, like triumphant Conquerors, tread upon their Necks.

What great Things, requisite for the Safety and Honour of the united Body, may

not be expected from the Conjunction of two such People, of whom it may, without Vanity, be said, That none under Heaven have better Heads to design, Hearts to undertake, or Hands to execute the noblest and boldest Enterprizes?

And if Riches, next to Hands, be the Strength of a Kingdom, what may we hope for from the Increase of our Seamen, the Improvement of our Shipping, and consequently the Advancement of our Trade, the happy Effects of this Union?

How goodly are thy Tents, O Jacob, Tabernacles, O Israel? What a delightful Prospect is opened to all Europe, by such Accession of Strength to a Nation, that does not abuse her Power to the disturbing and enslaving her Neighbours; but generously employs it to curb the Ambition of mighty Nimrods, those Plagues of Mankind to assist injured Princes, and relieve oppressed Subjects, and to keep the Balance of Power even, that every one may sit quietly under his own Vine, and under his own Fig-Tree?

And that I may once more resume the Psalmist's Metaphor, if the grateful Ode of this precious Ointment diffuses itself so far, that Strangers are refresh'd with it, no one at home will have Indignation at it. If any one of either Nation has, and shall repeat

Objecti

Objection, *To what purpose is this Waste?* There must be abundance of Charity to believe, that he cares any more for the Publick, than that first made it *did for the Poor*; and is well if he has not, with him, received the *Reward of Iniquity*.

Such *Peace within her Walls*, and *Plenty within her Palaces*, must be extremely pleasant to all that wish well to our *Jerusalem*; And where there is such a Prospect of that flourishing State, which the *Psalmist* describes in *Psal. cxli. That our Garners may be full, affording all manner of Store, that there be no breaking in, nor going out; or, according to the other Translation, no leading into Captivity, and no complaining in our streets*, either for want of Plenty at Home, or for Danger of Enemies invading from abroad; they will cry out with him, *Happy are the People that are in such a Case*; especially, since with all these invaluable Blessings, this Union brings that yet greater, of securing the Profession of God's Truth and Holy Religion among us, by the firmer Establishment of the *Protestant Succession* in the whole Island; they will, with Transports of Joy, add, *Yea, blessed are the People, who have the Lord for their God!*

And have we not reasonable Grounds to hope, that the Lord will continue to be our

God? that he will stablish the Thing which he hath wrought for us?

Union among Brethren, being, as I have observed, that which God commands, is the Author of, and delights in: And ours being made, not out of ambitious wicked Designs, that we may hurt others, but for the just Ends of preserving ourselves, of preventing Wars, and the fatal Consequences of them between the two Kingdoms, and of securing our Liberties and Properties, and the Civil Blessings we enjoy under our happy Constitution; and above all, our most happy Religion: A Thing so pleasing to God, and tending to such Righteous Purposes, cannot fail of the Divine Blessing, if we forget not of doing our Duty: Namely,

First, To pay our Tribute of Praise and Thanksgiving to God, the great Author of this Glorious Work; and to make our grateful Acknowledgments to those under whose Hands have been the happy Instruments in bringing it about.

God is jealous of his Honour, and when he does great Things for his People, expects the Glory of them; and whoever reflects on the many amazing Providences which have concurr'd to facilitate this difficult Undertaking; the raising of the *English* Power and Grandeur to such a Height, by the Unanimous

our Parliaments, the Wisdom and Secrecy
our Counsels, the provident Management
and just Disposition of our Publick Revenues,
and the wonderful Successes of our Victorious
Forces, not to be parallel'd in History; the
straining of Foreign Nations, who might
have been tempted to it by their Interest,
from opposing it; chiefly, the reducing him,
whom it is worse than a *Blenheim* or a *Ra-*
allies, so low, as not to be able by Force,
Money, or Credit, to give any successful
interruption to it; and the disposing the Ge-
nerality of the People of both Kingdoms,
and inclining their Hearts in favour of it;
must acknowledge the Work to be *the Lord's*
doing, and that it ought to be marvellous in
our Eyes. Let us therefore say, *Blessed be*
the Lord God, who only doth wondrous Things,
and *blessed be his glorious Name for ever, and*
the whole Earth be fill'd with his Glory!

But as God ordinarily works by second
Causes, let us not ungratefully neglect to
pay our just Acknowledgments to the happy
Instruments, whom he has made use of for
the Accomplishing this Great Work.

How Glorious was it in our Gracious
Queen, to engage in an Undertaking, which
had baffled all former Attempts! Nay, not
to be discouraged by one Disappointment,
which she met with herself, but to renew the

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Work with greater Application, and not desist till she had brought it to Perfection!

She knew a Time must come; for our sakes, for our Brethren and Companions sakes, for the universal Good of Christendom, may it be long, long deferr'd! when she shall be taken away, in whom alone her two Kingdoms were then united, and foreseeing, and tenderly pitying the miserable State of both upon their Separation, rested not till she had completed an entire and lasting Union of them; thereby providing, that as her Subjects are the Envy of the whole World, under her Auspicious Government; so, when she shall have changed this Earthly for a Heavenly Crown, they may continue to be as happy as they can be without her.

Seeing then, we may truly say, that We enjoy great Quietness, and such worthy Deeds are done to these Nations, by her Majesty's Providence, let us accept it always, and in all Places with all Thankfulness: And let us express our Thankfulness, by offering up our daily devout Prayers to God for her Long Life and Prosperous Reign, for all the Blessings of Earth and Heaven upon her; by a hearty Subjection to her Government, a willing Obedience to her Laws, and a cheerful Contribution of our best Endeavours to make

her Easy at Home, and Glorious Abroad; In short, by doing all that good Subjects can do, to make her, if possible, as happy in her People, as they are blessed in their QUEEN.

The Noble and Worthy Patriots, that were Commission'd to treat of this Union, must be ever remembred with Honour: It was a Work of that Consequence, that Comports, that Difficulty, and Niceness, that required Men of the greatest Zeal for the Publick, the largest Capacities, the most consummate Judgments, and most indefatigable Industry, to go thro' with it; and how well the Commissioners of the two Kingdoms did answer those Characters, is apparent from the speedy and happy Conclusion of the Treaty.

Nor ought those great Bodies, the Parliaments of both Nations, to be defrauded of their Shares in the Glory of this mighty Work: If it met with some Obstruction in that of the other Kingdom, and went on more difficultly and slowly there, it is not to be wondered at; it is not strange that a Brave and Warlike People, who had for many Ages enjoyed an Independent Sovereignty, were not quickly brought to Incorporate with another; and there were Pretences too plain and too plausible, not to be seen and made use of by designing

designing Men, to retard the Progress of such a Business: But the Wisdom of that Body discovered the Weakness of those Appearances, and by their Diligence they surmounted all real Difficulties; and we shall not do Justice to that Ancient Nobility, if we do not add, that they have generously sacrificed some Private Advantages to so great a Public Good.

The surprizing and almost incredible Dispatch with which it was carry'd thro' the two Houses here, demonstrates what a Noble Spirit animates those August Assemblies and that the greatest and most momentous Affairs may be concluded in a short time when a Zeal for the Common Good presides in the Consultations. The little Interruptions that were given to the Bill, should in Charity be construed to proceed from Intentions to mend the Terms, rather than from Designs to oppose the Thing; and those that disagreed in any particular Article with such Views, will heartily agree upon the whole; since if there be any thing wanting to complete the Happiness of this Union, it may, and no doubt will be supply'd, by the Care and Prudence of the *British* Parliament.

Nothing more remains, than that we do what is requisite on our Parts to make
lasting

for the Happy Union.

ing, and that we may reap the blessed
fruits of it; and that is,

To Serve God Faithfully; and,
To Love one another Sincerely.

God has indeed done great Things for us;
whereat we rejoice: He mightily delivered us,
when we cry'd unto him, in the Day of our
Calamity, when we had the blackest Pro-
spect before us, of utter Ruin to our Liber-
ties, Properties and Religion: He has mer-
cifully continued to us those great Blessings,
together with Peace and Plenty within our
Borders; while War and Devastation, Po-
verty and Misery, have marched thro' most of
the Countries of *Christendon*.

He has enabled us to carry on a long and
expensive War abroad, for eighteen Years,
during a short delusory Truce; and to main-
tain our Credit so at Home, that while our
Enemies *Mint-Bills* difficultly pass at 60 per
Cent. Discount, we have two Rich Bodies
here contending who should Circulate our
Exchequer-Bills at lower Interest than is
generally given, for Money upon the best
private Security; and our Funds were no
sooner open'd, but the People were pressing
to throw their Money into them, as the sa-
fest and best way of disposing it.

He

He has, by an uninterrupted Course of such amazing Successes, as have prevented our Wishes, and out-done our Hopes brought us within a reasonable View of Glorious Conclusion of this tedious War and to all these Blessings has now added the other, of Uniting the whole Island in one Kingdom; so that we have Reason to say *What Nation is there so great, that hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is, all Things that we call upon him for?*

How great then are our Obligations to *fear the Lord, and serve him with Sincerity and Truth?* And how aggravated will our Guilt be, and how dreadful our Punishment if we answer not those Obligations! Nothing provokes God more than Ingratitude. *You only,* says he to Israel, *have I known among all the Families of the Earth, therefore will I punish you for all your Iniquities:* And as God has distinguished us by his peculiar Blessing from all the Nations of the World; if we shall not live like a People so highly favoured by him; if we shall not be *led by his Goodness to Repentance*, but shall go on to provoke him by our Iniquities, what can we look for, but that he should make us as remarkable Instances of his Wrath and Vengeance, as we have hitherto been particular Objects of his Love and Favour?

The Terms then on which we may expect from God the Continuance of his Mercies to us, particularly the Blessings of this Union, are, our breaking *our Covenant with Death*, and *our Agreement with Hell*; our performing those Engagements to him, which we enter'd into at our Baptism; *our denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and living soberly, righteously and godly in this present World*: Our seconding our daily Prayers with our constant Endeavours, that God's Great Name may be hallowed, his Glorious Kingdom advanced, and his Holy Will done by us and others on Earth, as it is by the Blessed in Heaven: And next to these,

Our loving one another sincerely. And what should hinder this? God Almighty has made us all the Objects of his Love, why should we not be so of one another's? Our Saviour has told us, that *every Kingdom divided against itself, is brought to Desolation*: And we of this have had such woful Experience of the Mischief of those Divisions, which the Subtilty of our Enemies has made among us, that one would hope, we are by this time armed against all their Attempts of that kind: But whether our Experience has yet taught us that Wisdom or not, to be sure the Experience they have had of the former Success of those Attempts, will encourage them

them to try the Force of them again; especially now, since, upon this *Union*, they have little to hope for from any other Method, and greater Room to practise those, we should therefore, in Reason, be upon the strict Watch against them.

Let us then, *I beseech you*, mark *those that cause Divisions and Offences, and avoid them*: And let us suppress all those irregular Passions within ourselves, which dispose to be easily wrought upon by their Artifice, such as Pride, Covetousness, Envy, Jealous Malice, Revenge, and the like; and let us labour after the blessed Reverse of all these, that truly Christian Temper, that *Charity*, which is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no Evil, rejoiceth in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth, beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth in all Things.

Our Two Kingdoms are this Day united, let our Hearts from this time be so too. The Names of *England* and *Scotland* are laid in that of *Great Britain*; let all Names of Parties, and Characters of Distinction, be bury'd with them: Let there be no other Contentions between us, but those kind ones, who shall do each other the most friendly Offices; and let all our Emulation be,

do one another in hearty Affection, and
valorous Endeavours for the Service of our
QUEEN and Country.

Being so united, we shall be Terrible to
our Enemies, *as an Army with Banners*: We
shall comfort and rejoice our Friends and
Allies; and we and our Posterity may hope
to enjoy the blessed Effects of this Union,
till it shall be swallowed up in that Univer-
sal Union of all the People, Nations and Lan-
guages of the World, in that Glorious King-
dom of Christ; in which the *Wolf shall*
 dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie
 down with the Kid, and the Calf, and the
 young Lion, and the Fawning together, and a
 little Child shall lead them, &c. When there
shall be no hurting nor destroying in all his Holy
Mountain, and the Rest which he shall give
to Mankind shall be Glorious.

Hasten, O God, this Kingdom of thy Son.
Even so come Lord Jesus, come quickly!





A SERMON Preached at
CORONATION of King GEORGE
in the *Abbey-Church of Westminster*
October the 20th, 1714.

Pſalm cxviii. Ver. 24, 25
*This is the Day which the Lord
hath made, we will rejoice
and be glad in it :
Save now, I beseech thee,
Lord; O Lord, I beseech
thee send now Prosperity*



HERE is neither Author's Name
nor Title prefix'd to this *Pſalm*
but it is generally allowed
have been composed by David
after he had been anointed King
over *Israel*, as he was before over *Judah*
when the Lord having given him Rest round
about

out from all his Enemies, had brought the
home to the City of David, which he
newly built at Jerusalem.

It seems design'd to be sung in some so-
lemn Procession by the whole Congregation,
the King, the People, the Priests, who were
to bear their respective Parts in it, as appears
from the Change of Persons in several Verses
of it.

The King begins with calling upon the
Men of Israel, and House of Aaron, upon all
that fear the Lord, to join with him in huma-
ble and thankful Acknowledgments of the
continued Mercy and Bounty of God, which
he had so wonderfully experienced, in God's
preserving him from so many imminent Dan-
gers, rescuing him out of the Hands of so
many malicious and powerful Enemies, and
bringing him at last in Peace and Honour to
the Throne: He invites them to enter with
him into the House of the Lord, there to of-
fer up their devout Praises to God.

The People join their loud Acclamations,
acknowledge the Power of God in bringing
about this great Event, rejoice in their own
happiness, in having such a Prince set over
them, and beg of God to grant him a long
reign, and that as prosperous to the End as
it was in this happy Beginning.

X

Then

Then the Priests give a solemn Benediction to the King, and exhort the People to offer up their Sacrifices, in Testimony of their Thankfulness to God, for his wonderful Goodness both to them, and to the King that he had set over them.

And lastly, *David* concludes, by resolving himself, and calling upon the People, to preserve a constant Sense of the Divine Goodness, so eminently vouchsafed to them beyond and above all their Expectations.

This, as it is a very common, so, I think is a very just Account of this *Psalms* in its Literal Meaning, as it relates to *David*.

That Part of it, out of which I have taken my Text, is assign'd to the People; and it begins at the 22d Verse, with a very elegant Metaphor, *The Stone which the Builders refused is become the Head-Stone of the Corner*. This undoubtedly in the Figure belongs more eminently to Christ, who was the chief Corner-Stone of God's Building, his Church into which both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were to be united; and they have been so by Degrees ever since his Ascension into Heaven, and they will be so to Perfection in God's Time.

But what is said here in the Letter is a very fit and lively Representation of *David's* Advancement to the Throne; for after *Saul's*

Death

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Death, *David* was the Stone whom the Builders truly and properly rejected, when by God's own Appointment the Men of *Judah* had set him up to be their King. For *Abner*, that was General of all the Hosts of *Israel*, and they of *Benjamin* that were then in the Government, rejected *David*, and set up *Ishbosheth* to be their King; and all the Tribes, except only *Judah*, agreed to this. It is true, that upon a Difference which happen'd in a short time among themselves, some of them had kill'd *Ishbosheth*, and then soon after that all the rest of them struck in with *David*, and so the Stone which the Builders had refused came to be the Head-Stone in the Corner, by whom all the other Tribes were united with *Judah* in one Kingdom, by the wonderful Providence of God, which they looked upon with the greatest Admiration, and confes'd it to be *the Lord's doing*.

And then in my Text they break out in joyful and thankful Acknowledgments of God's Mercy to them in these wonderful Dispensations: *This is the Day which the Lord has made*; a Day distinguished and made particularly remarkable, on which they were to celebrate so great a Blessing, brought about by such various Methods of his Providence; that of having a Prince set over them, who being endued with all the requi-

site Qualifications for his high Office, they had all the Reason in the World to believe would be a King after theirs, as well as *after God's own Heart*: One able to protect them from their Enemies, having been *a Man of War from his Youth*, of whose Conduct and Valour they had had Experience, as the Men of *Israel* own'd before they anointed him. *In Times past, when Saul was King, thou wast he that led out and brought in Israel*: A Man of Prudence and Wisdom; *A Man prudent in Matters*, as one of *Saul's* Servants told him, who behaved himself wisely wherever he was sent, as it is said *1 Sam. xviii.* and in the 30th Verse, more wisely than all the Servants of *Saul*: One who should not only *be Captain over*, but also *feed the People of Israel*; should govern them with Tenderness as a Shepherd doth his Sheep; should not only not tear and devour them himself but guard them against the Beasts of Prey protect them in their Pastures, keep them within their proper Walks; and if any of the silly Flock should go astray, reduce them by the gentlest Methods: In short, a King from whom they might expect all the Blessings of a glorious, wise, just and clement Government.

This Day therefore they resolve to observe with all that Triumph and Exultation

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it becomes a People truly sensible of their happiness, and thankful for it; *We will rejoice and be glad in it.*

And then that it may be lasting, they pray God to bless their King, and prosper his Government: That God would prolong his life, and his Years as many Generations; *now, I beseech thee, O Lord;* a Petition that which we daily use in the Suffrages, *Lord, save the King;* and that his Reign may not only be long, but also flourishing and glorious; *O Lord, I beseech thee, send us Prosperity.* This was Israel's grateful behaviour upon King David's Accession to the Throne.

And now I fancy you going in your thoughts before me, in the Application of my Text to the great Solemnity of this day; your Hearts fired with a pious Emulation to out-do the Subjects of *David*, in your joyful Exultations upon it. Permit me, I beseech you, to be a *Helper of your joy*, by shewing,

I. How wonderfully the Providence of God has appeared in bringing about this great Event, his Majesty's peaceable Accession to the Throne of these Kingdoms: *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our Eyes.*

X 3

II. The

II. The great Reason which we have rejoice in the Blessings which it at present brings with it, and the further Happiness which we may justly promise ourselves from it: *This is the Day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

III. The Obligations we lie under to offer up our most fervent and constant Prayers to God for our King, and second them with our most sincere Endeavours, that his Reign may be as long and happy in its Duration as the Beginning of it is wonderful and glorious; *Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord; Lord, I beseech thee, send now Prosperity.*

I. I am to shew, how wonderfully the Providence of God has appeared in bringing about this great Event, his Majesty's peaceable Accession to the Throne of these Kingdoms.

The Parallel, I must own, does not hold in every Circumstance between our Country and that of the People of *Israel*: Our King was not as theirs was, *taken from following the Sheep*; but we have a Happiness above them in the Judgment of *Solomon*, the wise King, who says, *Blessed art thou, O Land, when thy King is the Son of Nobles*: Nor has he been preserved, as *David* was, from Dangers which pursued him, but from such

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he generously exposed himself to, on the most glorious Occasion: But the Providences that have seated him upon his Throne, are as remarkable as those which brought King David to his.

And here on this Head I must look back (who can do Justice to this glorious Day that does not?) to the happy Revolution, the Foundation of our present Rejoicing. Could any one have flatter'd himself with the Prospect of this Day in 1688? When all the Foundations of our Government were out of Course, none to bear up the Pillars of it; our Legal Constitution dissolv'd, the Fences of our Civil and Ecclesiastical Rights overturn'd, our Laws dispens'd with, and Arbitrary Power advanced in the room of them; an illegal Commission set up for Ecclesiastical Affairs; our Courts of Judicature and Posts of the greatest Trust fill'd by Men, whom our Laws had wisely excluded from the meanest Office; our Bishops suspended and imprison'd, and a learned Body in one of our Seminaries unjustly dispossest'd of their Freeholds; Mass-Houses publicly open'd, and all Methods of Fraud, Promises and Menaces, used to betray, decoy, or affright our People into them; a standing Army kept up to assert these avow'd Violations of our Constitution; and the vilest Practices

used to get a Parliament to make them Law. I can only give these short and imperfect Hints of our then miserable Circumstances when our Hearts were failing us for Fear, and for looking after those Things which we with too much Reason thought were coming upon us.

But then was God pleased to raise up a Deliverer for us, the Great WILLIAM of ever Glorious Memory, and by many wonderful Providences to conduct him safely hither, and make all Opposition fall before him till he became our King and Governor, and make him the happy Instrument in his Hands of delivering us from Popish Tyranny and Arbitrary Power, of restoring our Judges as at the first, and our Counsellors as at the Beginning; of settling us again upon the Foundations of our envy'd Legal Establishment in Church and State.

The securing these invaluable Blessings upon us, and the establishing a Balance of Power in Europe, was the great Business of his glorious Reign; who was in Journeyings ten, in Perils of Waters, in Perils by his Countrymen, in Perils in the City, in Perils in the Sea, in Perils among false Brethren, in Weariness, in Painfulness, and Watchings often.

Under all these God supported him; but He knew that the Gods of the Earth must

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Men, and was desirous to extend his Care of us beyond his own Life. He saw a great Breach made in the Settlement of the Crown as it then stood, by the Death of that hopeful young Prince the Duke of Gloucester; after him there was in the remainder only the then Princess Anne of Denmark, our most Gracious Queen, and little Prospect of Issue by her: And therefore to transmit the Blessings, of which God had made him the Instrument, to our late Posterity, he provided that Limitation of the Protestant Succession, which now God be praised so happily takes place. So that all the remarkable Providences, which appeared in bringing about the Revolution, must come into the Account of this great Event.

Upon the Death of our Glorious King WILLIAM, our late Queen of Blessed Memory succeeded to the Throne. Her Majesty not only passed Laws for the further Establishment of the Protestant Succession, but by her Arms and those of her Allies had, in humane Appearance, placed it almost out of Danger: Having in eight Campaigns, so glorious in the Conduct, and so astonishing in the Successes of them, as not to be parallel'd in History, so far reduced the only Power that could interrupt it, that there was little more

more wanting to have completed our Serenity.

But whether it was to correct us for our Sins whereby we had provoked God to anger; or to chastise our Confidence, which may be, we placed too much in the Arm of Flesh; or to convince us that his Providence which alone began, should alone have Glory of finishing this great Work; he pleased to suffer us to fall into a Condition from which nothing else could have relieved us: Our Enemy, who had set up a Pretender to this Throne, raised from a State asking Peace, to a Condition of giving Peace and Princes too to Europe; our Allies, so divided from us, others miserably disjointed and we ourselves not only unguarded, but wretchedly broken into Parties and Factions at home.

The Friends of the Pretender thought these Circumstances so encouraging, that they openly avow'd his Title in Writing and Discourse, and his Agents as boldly lift Soldiers to assert it with the Sword: And must have been very sanguine, who in the View of Things could have thought, that the Pretender, whom our Queen's repeated Instances could not remove from a Situation which her Parliament thought too near, would not, upon her Majesty's Demise, have brought

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brought a Foreign Army to join his Friends here, before the Protestant Heir, who was at much greater Distance, could have arrived, to have maintained his own Just Right, or defended his faithful Subjects.

But when that Day was come, that was to put a Period to that Royal Life, on the Continuance of which alone this threatening Danger seemed suspended; then was God pleased to mix so much Mercy with the stroke, as by his Providence to order it, that the unsettled Posture of Affairs Abroad, would not permit the Pretender's Foreign Friends, to send any Forces to encourage an Insurrection; and the Unreadiness of his surpris'd Abettors here, would not permit them to appear in such a manner as to invite an Invasion; but our King was peaceably proclaimed, to the universal Joy of his People: After the just Tribute of Tears for the Loss of our late Sovereign, no Complains were heard in our Streets, no Impatience was seen, but only for Want of his Majesty's Royal Appearance among us; as the Day of that grew nearer, that Impatience indeed increased, till at last our earnest Desires were fully satisfied, by his safe Arrival in his Kingdom, and glorious Entry into his Capital. This great Event may surely be said to be *the Lord's Doings*, and ought

II. The great Reason which we have
rejoice in the Blessings which it at present
brings with it, and the further Happiness
which we may justly promise ourselves from
it. Had this Succession been defeated, or
a successful Attempt of him, who pretended
a Right to the Crown; one educated in the
Maxims of *French Tyranny*, and the Principles
of *Popish Superstition*; we must have
fallen under the worst Slavery of Body and
Mind too; we should have been ruled, not
by Law, but by Will, and have held our
Lives and Fortunes at Pleasure only.

The Spiritual Government would have
been as absolute as the Civil; we should have
been obliged to an implicit Faith, and blind
Obedience, to have submitted to the most
monstrous Absurdities in Doctrine, and the
plainest Idolatry in Practice; and if any
should have disputed, or refused to obey,
they must have expected to have been enlight-
ened by the ancient Methods of Fire and
Faggot, or convinced by the more modern
ones of Dragoons, Dungeons, and Gallies.

We have had woful Experience of two
Popish Reigns since the Reformation; but the

little

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*the Finger of this, would probably have been
thicker than the Loins of the others: If those
Princes chastised us with Whips, this would
have done it with Scorpions; who would have
come with a Spirit, not only of Popery and
Gothry, but also of Resentment and Re-
venge, for our having dispossessed his sup-
posed Father of his Kingdom, and kept him
and himself so many Years from it; and
would, no doubt, have brought a Bill of
charges for the maintaining of their Family
and the War, which must have been defray-
ed, by giving up the Nation as a Province
to his great Patron, who had disbursed such
sums, as could not otherwise be satisfied.*

How great is that Blessing then, which
has deliver'd us from these dreadful Ap-
prehensions of certain Destruction to our
Church and Nation, and quietly settled a
King over us, under whom we may with
confidence hope to enjoy securely all our
Civil and Religious Rights, to call what we
have our own, *to sit every Man under his
vine, and under his Fig-Tree, and none shall
make us afraid; to have Peace established
without and within our Borders, to see the
Industry of our own Manufacturers and La-
bourers encouraged at Home, and our Com-
merce preserved and extended Abroad, and
the Wealth and Prosperity of our Nation
advanced,*

advanced, till She becomes the Joy or E
of the whole Earth; above all, to see
pure Church and holy Religion in a see
and flourishing Condition; her Doctrin
Worship, and Discipline maintained; her
mistress protected; her Ordinances and
nistration solemnly attended, and her
ders in God's good time enlarged: In sh
a King, from whose gracious Governmen
his Dominions Abroad, we may assure o
selves, that he will answer the Ends of
gistracy here, by being the Minister of
to us for Good, a Terror only to the E
does, but a Praise to them that do well;
he will feed us according to the Integrity of
Heart, and guide us by the Skilfulness of
Hands; that through him we shall enjoy
the Happiness that Subjects can desire,
Men or Christians, leading under him
quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness
Honesty.

And to complete this great Mercy, C
has given us fair Hopes, that it shall be c
rinned to our Children, and Childre
Children. We see a Prince, who by
early Demonstrations he has given, h
much he inherits his Royal Father's Vertu
has shewn how much he deserves to inh
his Kingdoms; and that under him our
sterity may expect the same Blessings wh

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enjoy at present. His Royal Highness is bless'd with hopeful Issue, by a Princess the brightest Character, from whom we may reasonably hope for many more Pledges of the lasting Happiness of these Kingdoms.

How ought we then to rejoice in this great Gratulation? which the Lord hath wrought for us, who has put a *new Song* into our Mouths, filling them with Laughter, and our Tongues with Singing, by these merciful Assurances which he hath given us, That it shall be well with us and our Children, if we do but our Duties; and answer,

III. The Obligations we lie under, to offer up our most fervent and constant Prayers to God for our King; and second them with our sincere Endeavours, that his Reign may be as long and happy in its Duration, as the Beginning of it is Wonderful and Glorious.

I may not enlarge upon the Duty of praying for Kings, which God has not only positively required from Subjects, but to encourage them in it, has declared, how pleasing and acceptable a Service it is in his Sight, and what Returns of Peace and Prosperity they may expect to themselves from it:

Nor

Nor may I enforce it from the Practice of the *Jews*, both for their own Princes, and for those Kings which had led them Captive or conquered them, the *Persians*, *Babylonians*, *Egyptians*, *Seleucidae*, and the *Romans*; nor from the Practice of the Primitive Christian Church, as it appears in the Writings of the Apologists and ancient Liturgies; nor from that of our own, in whose Service Prayers are so frequently offered for our Kings, that it has been objected tho' very unreasonably, as a Fault in our *Liturgy*.

I can only mention these Topicks; and indeed one would think, there should be little need of Motives to persuade People any thing, wherein their own Interest is highly concerned.

Are we sensible of the Blessings we do enjoy, and may expect under his Majesty's Auspicious Government, of which I gave but a short Sketch in my second Particular? And can we think much of begging the Continuance of Him and them from God, who alone gave, and who only can preserve them to us? To Him let us in our daily Addresses commend our Sovereign and his Government, begging for him in the Words of the ancient Christians, as recited by *Tertullian* *A long Life, a secure Reign, a safe Hou-*
valia

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brilliant Armies, faithful Senates, good Subjects, a quiet World, and all Things which he can want or desire, either in his Personal or Politick Capacity. But we must not rest here; to these our Prayers, we must add our honest Endeavours, to promote the great Ends we pray for.

And the best Way to do that, is, by approving ourselves good Subjects of him by whom Kings reign, by a sincere Obedience to his Laws, by living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World. This, Samuel tells the People of Israel, when they had asked a King, and Saul was set over them, was the only Condition upon which they might expect to be a happy People: If ye will fear the Lord, serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the Commandment of the Lord, then shall both ye, and also the King that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God, (i. e.) continue to be protected by him, in a safe and flourishing Condition; but he adds, If ye shall do wickedly, ye shall be consumed both ye and your King.

And God's Dealing with that People, both before under their Judges, as well as afterwards under their Kings, was according to their History is chiefly made up of many

many remarkable Interchanges of National Blessings, or National Judgments, upon Prince and People, as they proved obedient or disobedient to God.

And it will ever be so: *Righteousness will exalt a Nation, but Sin will be the Reproach the Ruin of any People*, especially such Sins as are aggravated by Ingratitude. God has vouchsafed many wonderful National Blessings to these Kingdoms; our Returns for them have been far from what they ought to have been: Let us take care to make better Improvement of this great complicated Mercy, which he has now bestowed upon us, by living henceforth like a People *saved by the Lord*. As he has by his distinguishing Providence made us a peculiar People, let us shew ourselves such, by being *zealous of good Works, denying all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and practising whatsoever Things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good Report, adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things*.

Particularly, let the Peace of God, that loving peaceable Disposition of Mind, which God so indispensably requires, rule in our Hearts, be the Umpire and Director thereof to compose all our Differences. This God has called us to in one Body, in a Political

Sens

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case: And we ought to pursue it, not only out of Thankfulness to him, for having made us Members of the most happily constituted Society in the World; but with regard to our own Safety and Interest. There are no Sins, which, besides their provoking the Anger of God, have a more fatal Tendency in themselves to ruin Societies, than Divisions and Divisions among the Members of them. We need not be told this, we have known it by sad Experience: How did our Divisions disturb the Reign, and shake the Throne of our Great Deliverer; almost as soon as he was placed upon it. They so clogged the Wheels of that Glorious Government, that they went heavily, disconcerted the King's Measures, disappointed many noble Designs, and hinder'd many Blessings, that might have been secured to us under his Reign, if they did not shorten it.

God grant that these, and other Experiences we have had, of the Miseries and Dan-
gers to which our unnatural Divisions have exposed us, may teach us more Wisdom now. Let all our Party Quarrels be buried in Oblivion, all distinguishing Names and Characters be forgotten: Let us not any more provoke one another, nor envy one another; but each of us being satisfied with the

Share he has in this common Blessing, which reaches to every Subject of these Dominions: let us all friendly join Heart and Hands together, to make it as lasting, as it is diffusive. And to that End, let all the Contentions and Emulations, which shall ever among us, be only who shall contribute most in his proper Station, to make that Crown which is now to be put on the Sacred Head of his Majesty, sit securely and easily there.

Thus I have briefly explained, and apply to you the Part of the People, in this Congratulatory *Psalm*, upon King David's Advancement to the Throne: Give me leave for a Conclusion, to take upon me the Part of the Priests, and to *bless our King out of the House of the Lord*. We of his House who attend his Sanctuary, and wait at his Altar, should probably have been the first Sufferers, if the Designs of a *Popish Pretender* had prevailed: That *Judgment* would have begun at the House of God. And as we are the more immediate Sharers in this Deliverance from it, I hope I may be allowed to express our grateful Sense of the Mercy, and the Votive Benediction of the Priests, in the Words following my Text, *Blessed be He that cometh in the Name of the Lord*. All Blessings from God attend the Person and Reign of Him, whom his Providence has

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er us : May He long continue the Defen-
er of our Faith, and Maintainer of our Ci-
l Rights ; May the happy Influences of his
lorious Government, extend as widely as
of the Sun ; May he be not only the
y of his own Subjects, but the Support of
s Allies, and the Terror of his Enemies ;
e Protector of the Liberties of *Europe*, the
uardian of the Protestant Interest, the Re-
ge of the Oppressed, the Deliverer of the
aptives, the Restorer of the Banish'd, and
common Blessing to Mankind : And when,
eing full of Years, and full of Glory, He
hall be gather'd to his Fathers, to take Pos-
ession of an Eternal Crown ; may his Tem-
oral Crown descend peaceably upon his
ROYAL SON ; and may there never be
wanting a Succession of Princes of his il-
lustrious House, to sway the Scepter of these
Kingdoms, *till Shilo shall come again.*

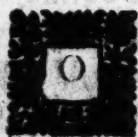




A SERMON preached before
KING at S^t James's Chappel,
Thursday June 7. 1716. Being
Day of Publick Thanksgiving
Almighty GOD, for Suppressing
the late Unnatural Rebellion.

2 COR. I. 10.

*Who delivered us from so great
a Death, and doth deliver
in whom we trust, that
will yet deliver us.*



IF these Words I may say, what
Saviour did to his Hearers, o
Passage that he quoted out of
Prophet Esay, in the 4th of S. Luke,
this Day is this Scripture fulfilled in your E
God Almighty has, in a wonderful Man

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Delivered us from a very great Death; he has, by a Series of strange Providences, continued this great Deliverance to us hitherto; and I hope we are met this Day, with a sincere purpose, to express both our grateful Sentiments of what he has done, and still does for us; and our Confidence and Trust in him, that he will yet deliver us. To forward and assist you in which Design, I shall

I. Consider *S. Paul's* Deliverance, which is referred to in this Text; a Deliverance from Death, a great Death, and so great a Death, and of which he was in such imminent Danger, that he tells us, in the Verse but one before, that he *despaired of Life*.

II. I shall take a View of *our own* Case. And if we have been threatened with a very great Death, the Destruction of all that is dear to us; (and this we have been so near unto, that, in the Eye of Man, there was no prospect of Escape; but we were press'd, as the Apostle words his Case, *out of Measure, above Strength, above our own Strength and Power* to help ourselves, even to Desperation; so that none could save us, but he that he tells us saved him, even he that raised the Dead;) and if we have been delivered from this great Death, and are still delivered; I may, I suppose, with good Reason, press you

to imitate our Apostle's Behaviour upon
Deliverance.

1. By acknowledging God to be the Author and Continuer of our Deliverance.

2. By offering up our Praises and Thankgivings to him for them.

3. By raising in ourselves, from a just Sense of what God has done, and does do for us, a Ground of Trust and Confidence in him for the future, that ~~he that has delivered~~ *and does deliver, will also yet deliver us.*

I. I am to consider *S. Paul's Deliverance* a Deliverance from a great Death. That the great Death was some imminent Danger, in which he was in in *Asia*, is certain, from the 18 Verse of this Chapter, where he says, *would not have you ignorant, Brethren, of the Trouble that came to us in Asia.* From whence the same Thread of Discourse is continued down to the Text. But, what Particular Trouble it was, that he met with there, being not agreed upon by Learned Men, I shall beg your Patience, while I endeavour to settle that Point.

Some of the Ancients, particularly *Tertullian*, (who is also followed by modern Commentators) do suppose the great Death, or great Danger of Death, mention'd in the

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ext, to be the same with that which he re-
s to in the 15th Chapter of his First Epi-
e; where he speaks, ver. 32. of *his fight-*
with Beasts at Ephesus, which was the
metropolis of the Lesser Asia. And some
for understanding both one and the other,
an actual Encounter that he had with wild
asts, on the Theatre there; to which he
as condemn'd, as a Criminal; and from
hich he was miraculously deliver'd, by the
ighty Power of God. But I must confess,
think the Reason urged against this Inter-
tation, is of great Weight; viz. that it
cannot be supposed, that so remarkable a
allage of his Life, so wonderful a Preserva-
on, would have been omitted, either by
himself, in the 11th Chapter of this Epistle,
where he particularly enumerates several of
Dangers and Deliverances; or by S. Luke,
the Account he gives us of him in the *Acts*
the *Apostles*.

And indeed, there is nothing in the Ex-
pressions in either Place, that does necessarily
fer, that he was actually under Execution,
and then delivered from it; but rather un-
der Sentence, or Designation to Death. For
in the 15th Chapter of the First Epistle,
what we read, *If I have fought*, may be read,
If I had fought; i.e. If I had been actually
exposed to a Combat with the Beasts, as I
was

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was designed for it. And in the Verse before my Text, he only says, that he had *Sentence of Death in himself*; i. e. he look upon himself as one under Sentence of Death; one that was designed and intended for the Slaughter. So that there is no necessity to gather from either of these Places that by the Death, from which he was delivered, is meant an actual Execution there; but rather only a Designation to it. And then we need not have Recourse to Fancy, supply a supposed Defect in *S. Luke's* History. For we shall find in the 19th Chapter of *Acts*, an Account of a great Danger which he was delivered from in *Asia*; a great Tumult raised in *Ephesus*, by *Demetrius* and Crafts-men, upon Occasion of *S. Paul's* Preaching against the Superstition and Idolatry of that Place; where his two Companions were haled away to the Theatre: probably with a Design to throw them to Lions; and he himself narrowly escaped.

The Learned *Grotius* would refer us to the following Chapter, *Acts* xx. vers. 19. for Account of this great Death; where *S. Paul* tells the Elders of *Ephesus*, whom he had convened at *Miletus*; *Ye know, from the first Day that I came into Asia, how I have spent my Time with Tears and Temptations; that*

tyrals and Persecutions, that beset me, by the
ing in wait of the Jews.

But this seems to be too general an Ac-
count of the Matter; and does not satisfy
the Doubt, what particular Passage of his
life it is, that he has an Eye to in the Text.
And indeed, I see no Reason to believe, but
that S. Paul, in this general Account of his
sufferings in Asia, had a Regard, among the
rest, to that particular Story in the foregoing
Chapter. For he seems to refer to all the
troubles, that happen'd to him, from his first
coming into Asia: And why then should it
be imagin'd, he overlooked so remarkable a
one as this?

'Tis true, he says of those, that they beset
me by the lying in wait of the Jews: But
whoever consults the Story, in the foregoing
Chapter, will see Cause to believe, that the
Jews had a Hand in that Matter; for 'tis
plain, they were very busy in that Tumult;
and, we may be sure, with no good Design
on S. Paul.

There is a Reason urged, why that Expres-
sion of his, in his First Epistle, mention'd
before, of his fighting with Beasts at Ephesus,
cannot relate to this Danger, in Acts xix. be-
cause, as 'tis said, that Epistle was wrote be-
fore this Tumult happen'd at Ephesus: And
if this be true, 'tis unanswerable.

I do not think myself obliged at present to enquire nicely into this Matter; and shall only say, that there is great Reason to believe, that that First Epistle was written, not as the Author of the Postscript, whoever that was, says, from *Philippi*; which, as we read in *Acts* xvi. is a City in *Macedonia*; for there are no Salutations in it from the Saints in *Macedonia*; but rather from some Place in *Asia*, from whence he sends Salutations in the 19th Verse of the last Chapter; *The Churches in Asia salute you*: And particularly from *Ephesus*, where he proposes, at the 8th Verse to stay till *Pentecost*; *I will tarry at Ephesus till Pentecost*.

But yet, if it be objected, that he went away from *Ephesus* immediately after the quieting of this Uproar, as some conclude from the 1st Verse of the xxth Chapter of the *Acts*; where it is said, after the Uproar was ceased, *Paul called to him the Disciples and embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia*; and if this should be admitted as a Reason, why his First Epistle could not be written from thence after this Uproar and consequently, his fighting with Beasts at *Ephesus*, mention'd in that Epistle, cannot refer thereto: Yet I am sure, 'twill afford good Argument for That for which I am much more concern'd, that my Text has

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particular Relation thereto. For 'tis certain,
his Second Epistle was written from *Macedo-*
nia: And if he went so immediately from
Ephesus, upon his Escape of the Danger of
his tumultuous Uproar, into *Macedonia*,
from whence he writes this Epistle; what
Danger can it be so probably supposed to be,
from which he blesses God in the Beginning
of this Epistle for delivering him, and of
which he seems so solicitous to inform the
Corinthians, as this which he so lately and so
narrowly escaped in that same Place, which
in the Verse but one before my Text he
makes the Scene of it, viz. *Asia*?

I know the Learned *Lightfoot* will not al-
low this to be the great Death there men-
tioned; and his Argument is, because we
do not read of any the least Damage that
actually happen'd to him in that Tumult.
But with all due Reverence to the Ashes of
so Great a Man, I cannot think his Argument
to be of any Force; for certainly a Man may
be, and truly said to be, in great and emi-
nent Danger of Death, tho' he may be pre-
served by the good Providence of God from
actually sustaining any the least Hurt.

I doubt not, our Apostle thought himself
to be, and really was in very great Danger,
both at *Jerusalem*, when more than Forty of
the *Jews* had bound themselves under a
Curse,

Curse, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed him; and also at Damascus, when the Jews had taken Counsel to the same Purpose, and he was glad to be down the Wall in a Basket by Night, to avoid them: He was in Danger, I say, in both Places, tho' no actual Harm happen'd to him in either.

His two Companions in the Tumult have been now speaking of, were hurried away by the Rabble to the Theatre; it may be, as Dr. Lightfoot himself yields, and I think I may say most probably, with a Design to cast them to the Lions: And can we imagine that they had less cruel Intention towards him? All the Fault of Gam and Aristarchus was, that they were *Patres Compatrioti in Travel*; 'twas He that anger'd them; 'twas this Paul that had preached against their Idolatry, and persuaded and turned away much People, Verse 26. and 'twas for His Sake that the others were laid hold on. And would they not much rather have had Him to the Theatre, and more certainly have cast Him to the Lions, if by the Advice of his Friends, and kind Intimation of the Designs, given him by the *Astarchs*, he had not been hinder'd from appearing publickly among them? And if those were their Intentions concerning him, he might well look
upon

on his Escape as a Deliverance from a very great Death.

But *Eslius* has an Objection against Their Interpretation of that Passage in his First Epistle, concerning his fighting with Beasts at *Colossus*, who understand it of his being exposed to the Lions, as *Ignatius* was; which may be urged against my Interpretation of this Place: And it is this; that the Punishment of casting to Lions, was a Punishment only for Slaves and viler Persons, but not for a Free-Man, and Citizen of *Rome*, as was *Paul*. Now this Objection would signify something, if it could be supposed that a Noble always acted prudently, and upon Consideration; and that Zeal for a false Worship and Interest, did never carry Men to illegal and unjustifiable Actions; and if *Paul* himself had never elsewhere met with Treatment, from which his Character, as a Roman, ought to have secured him.

But we read in the 22d of the *Acts*, that he was bound at *Jerusalem* with Thongs, and had been Scourged too, notwithstanding his being a Roman, if he had not at that instant told the *Centurion* that he was so. Nay, in *Acts* xvi. which comes nearer to this Case, when he had cast a Spirit of Divination out of a Damsel, who by her soothsaying had brought much Gain to her Masters; and when
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her Masters saw that the Hopes of their Gain was gone, they lay hold on Paul and Silas, draw them into the Market-Place, raise a Rabble, and instigate the Magistrates against them, insomuch that they beat them with many Stripes, imprison and put them in the Stocks: Which was so very unjustifiable Treatment of Men that were Romans, that when the Magistrates were informed that they were so, and insisted upon their Privilege, they were glad to stoop, and come themselves in Person, and beseech them to come forth of the Prison.

So that it is no strange or improbable thing, that the Men of Ephesus, who were zealous in their Idolatry, especially when they were set on by those who found their Account in propagating and asserting their Superstitious Worship, should design our Apostle, who preached against the Idol of the one, and consequently the Mammon of the other, to a Punishment that they could not justify: Nay, we plainly read in the Story that the Officer told them, that their Zeal had transported them to do that, for which they were in Danger to be called to an Account.

I know but one Objection more that can be pretended, and 'tis this, That in the several Accounts of these Matters, of his Danger at Ephesus, and of the great Death in the

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Text; mention'd by *S. Luke* and *S. Paul*, he himself seems to have had very different Apprehensions of them. As to that at *Ephesus*, he seems to be altogether unapprehensive of any Danger; for 'tis said, that he would voluntarily have gone into the Tumult, but that the Disciples hinder'd him: Whereas of this he complains, that he was press'd out of Measure, above Strength; that he despaired of Life, and looked upon his Escape as little less than a Resurrection from the Dead: To which I have two Things to say:

1. That tho' *S. Paul* would voluntarily have enter'd in to the People, had not the Christians hinder'd him; yet it does not from hence follow, that he was unapprehensive of the Danger, which by so doing he should expose himself to. For 'twas no strange thing, in the first Ages of the Church, for Christians to express their Zeal and Love for Christ, by knowingly and willingly running into Sufferings and Death. Nay, our very Apostle, when the Prophet *Agabus* had foretold, that if he went up to *Jerusalem*, the *Jews* would bind him, and deliver him into the Hands of the *Gentiles*; and when the Christians endeavoured with Prayers and Tears to hinder him from taking that Journey, they could not prevail; but he calls those Endeavours of theirs, to keep him from taking

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taking that Journey, a breaking of his Heart, and declares his Readiness, not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem, for the Name of the Lord Jesus. But,

2. Supposing that he was unapprehensive of the Danger at that time, when he would have gone in to the People; what hindered but that afterwards, when the Brethren had inform'd him better; when he heard what was done to his two Companions; especially, when he had that Message sent him by the Asian Præfects, that he should not venture himself abroad: What, I say, hindered but that, when the Matter was over, upon reflex View in cold Blood, he may make another Judgment of the Danger he had been in, than his Zeal would suffer him to do in the Time of Action?

I take it therefore, that this great Danger mention'd in my Text, which God deliver'd S. Paul from in Asia, was the great Danger of Death, which he was in upon Occasion of that Tumult, which Demetrius and the Crafty men rais'd against him at Ephesus, the chief City of Asia; of which we have a large Account in the fore-mentioned 19th of the Acts. And to justify this Opinion, I might have urg'd the Authority of several Learned Men who expound this Place the same way, and give good Reasons for it: But omitting them

I have rather chose to answer the Objections, which Men of another Opinion in this Matter have advanced against it. And those being removed, I think it sufficient to say,

1. That 'tis a reasonable *Postulatum*, that so remarkable a Deliverance, as S. Paul makes this in the Text, would not probably have been omitted by S. Luke, in the History of his Life. And then, this being allow'd;

2. That there is no particular Danger, which S. Paul was in in *Asia*, mentioned by S. Luke, but this which I contend for, which happen'd to him at *Ephesus*. And that this was a great Death, or a very great Danger of Death, may be gathered from several Circumstances in the Story: From the Consideration of the Persons from whom he was in Danger; from the Provocation he had given them; from what they actually did upon that Provocation: From whence we likewise probably conjecture, what they would have done further, if they had had Opportunity.

The Persons from whom he was in Danger, were not only a Rabble, got together in a tumultuous manner, they knew not why, tho' from Them there's no more Justice or Mercy to be expected, than from the raging Waves of the Sea in a Tempest: But also superstitious Bigots in a false Reli-

gion; zealous Worshippers of a Goddess of Men's making, and of a wonderful Image pretended to be dropt from Heaven. And these were stirr'd up by those who got their Livelihoods, much Wealth, by making Objects for their Idolatrous Worship; little Silver Boxes, with the Image, or Picture, of their Goddess in them, for their Adoration.

The Provocation he had given them, was no less than openly declaring against their Goddess and Image-Worship; saying, that they were no Gods that were made with Hands; that the Pictures and Images, which they made and sold, and the other worshipp'd were not fit Objects for such Worship. And by this means, their Goddess, they apprehended, was in Danger to be despised, her Temple desecrated, her Worship forsaken and consequently (which no doubt some of them were more concern'd for) their Craft whereby they got their Wealth, would be likely to come to nought. And in what furious manner, may we imagine, would these blind Zealots, push'd on by the designing Craftsmen, express their Resentments of so great an Injury?

What they did, we read at the 28th Verse. They first make a publick and clamorous Acknowledgment of the Greatness of the Goddess.

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Goddeſs, and of their particular Relation to
; *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*: And
prepare to revenge the Affront offer'd
by ſacrificing to her thoſe that gave it.
they lay Hands upon *S. Paul's* Companions,
meeting with them firſt) and hurry them
way to the Theatre, with a Deſign, as I
ſerved before, to expoſe them there to
wild Beaſts. And however they changed their
Minds, and ſuffered them to eſcape; yet 'tis
reaſonable, from hence,

To conjecture, that could they have caught
him, they would not have failed to have caſt
him to the Lions, who was the Principal in
that unpardonable Injury; when they were
near doing it to thoſe, whoſe only Guilt
(that appears) was, that they were of his
Company.

This then was that great Death, or Dan-
ger of Death, that threatned *S. Paul* at *Ephe-*
ſus in *Asia*, and into which he was very nigh
ſlipping himſelf. For the 30th Verſe tells
us, that he would have enter'd in to the
people, when they were in that mad Ferment
and Uproar.

But it pleaſed God, that the Diſciples
ſhould not ſuffer him to go among them;
which is more remarkable, to order it
ſo, that the very *Aſiarchæ*, the Chief of *Asia*,
our Translators render the Word; (but

they were properly the Prefects, or Officers that were appointed to look after those barbarous Executions, and who may therefore be very well supposed to know the Design of the People concerning him) these should send to him to keep out of the Way. And thus God's Providence made use of those who were to have been employ'd in the Management of his Death, as Instruments in the saving of his Life.

And thus have I consider'd S. Paul's Deliverance from the great Death in the Text.

II. I am in the next place to take a View of our own Case. And we shall find, that it comes very near that of S. Paul's; that we have been delivered from a very great Danger as well as he; and that the Parallel will hold in several Circumstances, both of the Danger and Deliverance.

Who delivered us, says our Apostle, *and doth deliver*; he mentions past, as well as present Deliverances. And if in applying his Case to ours, I should recount the several Deliverances of this Church and Nation from the many secret Plots, and open Attempts, of our *Romish* Adversaries, in every Reign, since our just and necessary Departure from their Idolatrous Communion; his Example would acquit me from Impertinence. But I shall look no further back, than the Year

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1688, wherein was the Commencement of that great Deliverance, which God has by a Series of gracious Providences continued to us to this Day : And all the National Blessings we have received since, even That for which we now thank him, are but so many Links in that wonderful Chain of Mercies. And 'tis but too necessary to call the Thoughts of Many back to that Time, who were then sufficiently sensible of the imminent Danger we were in ; but after they were deliver'd, the Image of their past desperate Condition soon vanish'd out of their Minds ; and they were like S. James's Man, beholding his natural Face in a Glass, who goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of Man he was. But however Distance of Time may have lessen'd the Danger that then threaten'd us, and consequently the Deliverance from it, in some People's Thoughts ; I will venture to call it a Death, and a great Death. For that which threatens the utter Destruction of a Thing, may very well be called Death : And that which threatens that Destruction to all Things that we value, may be termed a great Death.

Now there is nothing that Men value more, than their own Liberties and Properties, Lives and Religion, and the Welfare of their Posterity. How great a Death then must

that be, that threatens the Ruin of all these. To throw down the Mounds and Fences that secure them, and lay them open to be trampled upon and trodden down at Pleasure. How miserable is the Case of that People that may be confined, and made Beggars at Will; that may not be suffered to enjoy their Religion and Lives together; but if they will secure these, must make Shipwreck of That. And what an Addition to their Misery, must the dismal Prospect of the wretched Condition of their unhappy Posterity be, when they can see nothing entail'd upon them, but the most vile and abject Slavery of Body and Mind too?

And that this great Death threatned us of this Nation, however willing some are to forget it now, I am sure every considering Person was sufficiently sensible about Twenty Eight Years ago; and he was a strange sanguine Man, that did not then despair of Life. The Inundation was just breaking in upon us, and we were in such a kind of Streight, as the *Israelites* at the *Red-Sea*; we were neither able to stand up against our Danger, nor to fly from it.

The Persons that were designing and working this great Death for us, were, like those that intended our Apostle's Destruction, superstitious Bigots, Worshipers of Saints

and Images, fiery Zealots for their Religion; who have sacrificed more Lives to it, than ever the Heathens did to their Gods. And among these, the Chief were the Craftsmen, who have made a perfect Trade of Religion; have turned the Altars where they were Consecrated, into Tables of Money-Changers; and the Mysteries of Faith and Godliness, into Mysteries of Gain, and growing great: That deal not only in such petty Things, as *Demetrius* and his Craftsmen did; in small Boxes, with Images or Pictures in them, (tho' they have their *Agnus Dei's*, and little Consecrated Trinkets, their pretended Relicks that they make Advantage by;) but in Matters of much greater Concernment.

They have got the Keys of Heaven and Hell, and Purgatory too; they Trade in Absolutions, Masses, Indulgences, Plenary Indulgences; they put a Tax upon Sins, and set Heaven to Sale.

How easy is it for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!

And what was the Provocation we gave them? Why, we protested against their Superstitious Fopperies and Idolatry; we declared with *S. Paul*, that they were no Gods which were made with Hands; that neither Crucifix nor Image, however curiously wrought or painted by the Artificer, nor Wa-
fers

fers consecrated by the Priest, nor Saints Canonized by the Church, were fit Objects for Religious Worship; that their Mordant Purgatory, their vain boasting Pretences of Infallibility, and to turn Bread, by a few Words speaking, into the Body of their Saviour; their Empirical Remedies of Absolutions, as they apply'd them, of Masses, Indulgences, the Churches Stock of Merits of those who had more than enough for themselves, &c. that these were only Holy Cheats to cozen Men out of their Money here, and their Souls hereafter.

And this was so insupportable an Injury of so fatal a Consequence to their Craft whereby they amass'd their Wealth; that 'twas no wonder, that when they had (as they thought) a fit Opportunity to do it, and a Power to back them, they turned their secret and disguised Methods, whereby they had been long endeavouring our Ruin under hand, into more open and avow'd Attempts upon us; that they laid hold upon some of our Companions; and, by their Treatment of them, and Usage of others, gave us full Intimation of what was quickly like to befall us all.

They had all Authority, Law and Power in their own Hands: They were most wrathfully displeas'd at us; and Religion and In

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Interest spurr'd them on, to wreak their Fury upon us; as far as their Power would permit.

In these Circumstances 'twas not strange, if we had the Sentence of Death in ourselves; being pressed out of measure, above Strength, we despaired of Life. But he, who raises the Dead, took Pity on our righteous (tho' seemingly dying) Cause: Our Deliverance was so seasonably wrought for us, in so wonderful a manner, and by such quiet and gentle Methods, that it plainly appear'd to be his doing, who is a present Help in Time of Trouble; who only doth marvellous things; and who many times chooses to appear for his Servants, as well as to them, not in great Winds, and Earthquakes, and Fire, but in still, small Voice.

Thus God deliver'd Us, as well as S. Paul. And, that I may not omit one Circumstance, wherein our Cases are parallel; As, by the Providence of God, the *Asian* Officers were in a great measure the Means of his Escape; so some of those, that were designed to have been the Instruments of our Ruin, proved serviceable in the Accomplishing our Deliverance.

And how wonderfully did God continue that Deliverance to us, by Securing the Government then establish'd, in its Infancy, from the

the Monsters that endeavour'd to destroy it in the Cradle; by preserving the Life of the great Instrument of it, under a weak State of Health, notwithstanding the great Fatigues and Dangers, to which he expos'd himself in many Voyages and Campaigns, and the wicked Conspiracies formed against him by his Enemies, till he had, in Conjunction with his Confederates, brought the Common Enemy to make Peace. And when upon the Dissolution of that Confederacy, and the Disbanding of our Forces, the great Disturber of Europe took Occasion treacherously to break that Peace; still our King was living the only Person capable, by his Character and Interest with so many Foreign Potentates, of Accomplishing such a Work, to form a New and Glorious Alliance. But yet He had not done all that God intended, or that was necessary to complete our Deliverance, which, had not a Protestant Succession been settled, would have been but of short Continuance; and before this Time, we had been under the Yoke of a Popish Government again. That precious, but declining Life was therefore yet preserved, that he might put the Last Hand to his Great Work, by Settling the Succession to the Crown in the Illustrious House of *HANOVER*. And then, not till then, was he gather'd to his Fathers

thers ; leaving his Successor, our late Gra-
vous Queen, strengthen'd by a powerful Al-
liance abroad, and much secured at home by
the Limitation of the Crown to a Protestant
family, to pursue and complete his Great
Designs.

And how wonderfully did the Work of
the Lord prosper in her Hands, for many
Years ! Neither Walls, nor Works, nor
Rivers, nor Rivers, could stop the Victorious
Progress of Her Majesty's Forces, and those
of Her Allies ; which, under the Conduct of
the Consummate General, routed the Armies
of the Enemy, as oft as they engaged them,
and took his Towns as certainly as they sat
down before them ; till by a long Series of Glo-
rious Successes, we had reduced him so low,
that we had it in our Power to have demand-
ed what Terms we would for our own Se-
curity, and for the Safety and Quiet of all
Europe.

And here I could willingly cast a Veil over
what follows, and heartily wish that History
would do so too. But alas ! 'tis a vain Wish :
The Story has been told in Gath, and pub-
lish'd in the Streets of Askelon : The Daugh-
ters of the Philistines have rejoiced, the
Daughters of the Uncircumcised have tri-
umphed.

I would not dwell upon the ungrateful Subject; and shall only say, that by a most amazing Conduct, we were so far thrown into the Power of the Ambitious Aspirer an Universal Monarchy; and the Way was prepared for the Pretender to this Crown to come over, with his necessary Attendants Popery and Slavery; that there seemed little more wanting to complete the Design of our grand Enemy, and our Ruin, than for him to have said to his Viceroy, in the Words *Jezebel to Ahab, Arise and take Possession.*

And here again, we had the Sentence *Death in ourselves*; but God, who had before deliver'd us, did now again deliver us by providentially placing His Majesty on the Throne of these Kingdoms in that Critical Juncture.

There being no Disturbance at Home, no Attempt upon us from Abroad, during the Time His Majesty was necessarily detain'd from us; no Opposition to his Landing, but an Universal Joy express'd upon his Arrival we were ready to say, that *surely the Bitterness of this Death is past.*

But we flatter'd ourselves with vain Words Measures were then concerting Abroad, for Encouraging and Assisting an Insurrection at home. And there were too many among us, like those Enemies of David, Psal. lxi

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whose only Device it was to cast him out, whom God would exalt. Like them, they delighted in Lyes, and were industrious to asperse his Majesty, his Illustrious Family, and his wise and just Administration, by Lyes so wicked and malicious, as could proceed from none but the Father of them; and so monstrously absurd, as could be swallow'd by none, but such as were given up to strong Delusions, to believe a Lye. And these Eyes they wake in Hypocrisy, speaking good Words with their Mouths; pretending a Respect for the Government, and some of them swearing too with their Lips, while at the same time they cursed it in their Hearts, and were doing all in their Power to destroy it. By these, and other vile Methods, they corrupted the poor unthinking People, work'd them up into tumultuous Riots, and then into open Rebellion.

Had the Attempt been made, and supported from Abroad, when we had the first Intimation of the Design, and were little prepared to oppose it, having but few Forces, and many of them not to be depended upon; this Nation must have been for some time a miserable Scene of Blood and Confusion, whatever might have been the final issue at the last.

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But God was pleased by another Providence, to embarrass the Affairs of a neighbouring Kingdom, from which the Conspirators expected the greatest Assistance; and to retard their wicked Enterprize, till the prudent Provision of the Legislative Power, and the diligent Application of the Executive, our Forces were so augmented, that by the wise Disposition of some of them, a great Part of the Island was kept quiet, and many that wished well to the Rebels were hinder'd from joining them; and by the Conduct and Bravery of the others, in those Parts where they were actually in Arms, the Traytors were entirely routed. And when the Pretender came amongst them, to rally his scatter'd Forces, to animate them by his Presence, and retrieve his lost Game, upon the Approach of His Majesty's Army, he stood before them, and stole away by Night from the Island, leaving his Men to save themselves by flying into their Fastnesses; who being pursued thither by Part of the King's Troop, some of them have been taken, others have surrender'd, and others have been slain, and so the Rebellion has been happily suppress'd.

A Rebellion, that had one aggravating Circum-
 gradient to blacken it, beyond former Rebellions. We hardly read of one, but

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Others in it have pretended to justify themselves, by charging the Government with some notorious Violations of the Laws, some great Oppressions upon the Subject, some cruel Grievances for which they could not find Redress: But in This there has not been the Pretence of one illegal Thing done by His Majesty, who may justly appeal to his People, in the Words of Samuel to Israel, Behold, here I am, witness against me before the Lord: Whose Ox have I taken? Or whose Ass have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed?

So unprovoked was this Rebellion, so little Reason was there given for it, and so little Grounds therefore to have expected it; and this, if any thing, might in some measure excuse the unjust Surmizes of some well-meaning Persons, who look'd upon the Accusations we had of Invasions and Insurrections attended, as only Artifices of Men in Power, to raise more Forces to be employed to other purposes: But surely the Insurrections in North and South Britain, the Arms, Ammunition, and Officers sent to the Rebels from Abroad, the Battles at Preston and Dunblain, and the Pretender's Landing in Scotland, will cure the Suspicions of those weak Persons; and silence the Glammers of those wicked Men, who infused those Thoughts into the Others.

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And

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And I cannot but wish at least, if I may not hope, that the happy Issue of this Rebellion will convince all those that were concern'd in it, or Favourers of it, that the present Settlement, against which they have been conspiring, is a *Work of God*, and that they cannot overthrow it; and make them refrain from any farther Attempts against it, lest haply they be found to fight against God, who has deliver'd, and doth deliver, and in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. Which brings me to consider S. Paul's Behaviour upon his Deliverance, and to press you to a Imitation of it. And, . . . Let us, with him, acknowledge God to be the Author of our Deliverance. 'Tis too common a Fault with the most when they receive Mercies, whether Deliverances from Dangers, or positive Blessings, that they do not look farther than Second Causes, but rest there, as if they were the Authors of all. Thus Deliverances from Sickness, are too often ascribed only to the Skill of the Physician, and the Virtue of his Medicines; the increasing of a Man's Estate to his prudent Industry, and provident Management of it; and in publick Cases, the Peace and Prosperity of a Kingdom, to the sage Counsels and wise Administration of those that sat at the Helm; and Successes in War,

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War, to the Conduct of the Officers, and Prowess of the Soldiers. Not but that a due Consideration ought to be had of all these, and a just Respect paid them in their proper Places and Capacities, as they are excellent Instruments in the Hand of a gracious God, for these Purposes: And indeed it would be a most unjust, as well as an ungrateful thing, not to make them all the Acknowledgments of their Services, and pay them all the Respect and Honour for them, that are consistent with the owning the Superintendency of Providence. But not to look beyond them, not to see that wise Hand that guides and governs them, but to impute the Whole to them, is such an egregious Folly, as to ascribe a curious Piece of Work to the Instruments wherewith the Artificer wrought, and not to the Artificer that managed those Instruments. And that 'tis a high Provocation in the Eyes of God, may be gather'd from that Concern which he expresses for his Honour in such Cases, especially in the Deliverances of his People, in which he is extremely jealous, lest the Glory of them should be given to any other than himself.

We have a remarkable Instance of this in Judges vii. where we read, that when Gideon, that judg'd *Israel*, had got together an Army of 32000 Men to go against the *Midianites*,

Midianites, God made him dismiss them all
 200, for this Reason, lest the Victory he in-
 tended to bestow upon them, should be im-
 puted to the Number and Strength of the
 Forces: For so he tells him at the 2d Verse
*The People that are with thee are too many, for
 me to give the Midianites into their Hand.*
 Why so? *Lest Israel vaunt themselves against
 me, saying, Mine own Hand hath saved me.*
 And for this Reason, among others, it is
 that he is pleased many times to suffer a Pe-
 ple to be brought to the last Extremity,
 blast many hopeful Projects, and defeat se-
 veral likely Methods for their Escape, to su-
 per them to come to their Wit's End, that they
 know not which way to turn themselves
 before he interposes for their Relief; that
 he may convince them, that their Deliverance
 was his doing; *the Work of that Right Hand
 that bringeth mighty things to pass.*

Let us then avoid so great a Folly, and
 heinous a Provocation, as not to see and
 the Finger of God, which has been so vi-
 sible concern'd in our Deliverance. Let us rat-
 her imitate the Example set us by S. Paul, who
 acknowledges that 'twas *God who raises the
 Dead, that delivered him from his great Decease.*
 And in 2 Tim. iii. where he recounts the Per-
 secutions and Afflictions which came to him
 at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra; he adds

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ver. 11. that out of them all the Lord deliver us. And in the 4th Chapter of that Epistle, ver. 17. The Lord stood with me. And let us follow, and look upon all Second Causes as unactive Instruments in themselves, and no more able of themselves to work any Deliverance or Good for us, without God's Concurrence and Guidance, than the Pencil of a Painter to make a beautiful Picture, without the Painter's Hand directing it. And let us try out with David, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us: Not unto our Policy, or Foresight, or Management; Not to our Strength, or Power; Not to any other thing, than thy Name only, be given the Honour; who, we acknowledge, hast delivered us, and dost deliver us. To whom, 2. Let us offer up our most devout and hearty Thanksgiving for it. S. Paul is a most eminent Pattern of this Practice. There is not one of his Epistles to the several Churches founded by him, that he does not begin with giving Thanks and Glory to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ. In this particularly, immediately after the Salutation, at ver. 3, he breaks out, Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, who comforteth us in all our Tribulations, &c. And in the Verse after my Text, where he asks the Assistance of their Prayers, in order to

future Deliverances, he seems to have n (or very little) Regard to any thing else than the Glory that would thereby redound to God: As if he desired a Deliverance through their Prayers, not upon the Account of any Concern or Interest of his own in it but purely as 'twould be an Occasion of many Thanksgivings to the Gracious Author of it: *You*, says he, *helping together by Prayer for us*. For what End? Why, *That for the Gift bestowed upon us, by the Means of many Persons, Thanks may be given to God by many on our Behalf*.

And certainly, there is not a more equitable, or reasonable Thing in the World, than that we should make this Return for his Mercies, to our most bountiful and disinterested Benefactor. Nay, if we will take David's Word, who was as well experienced in the Duty as any Man that ever lived upon the Earth, there is not a more delightful Employment. He says, *It is a joyful and a pleasant thing to be thankful*. And no doubt he says right: For 'tis the very Employment of Heaven; the Business of the blessed Angels and glorified Spirits, to sing Hallelujahs and Praises, to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

As we hope then to increase their Number hereafter, and join in Consort with them

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them in Eucharistical Anthems for ever; let us inure ourselves to that which must be our Eternal Exercise, if ever we are so happy as to come among them; *In every thing giving Thanks; and, upon all Occasions, singing and making Melody in our Hearts to God.* But especially, upon such Occasions as this of our present Meeting, for such Mercies as I have now recounted; by which God has secured, and does continue to us, the Opportunities of doing it, in a Way acceptable to himself; *Of singing the Lord's Song in our own Land, and in our own Language; Of worshipping him in the Beauty of Holiness, and offering him a reasonable Service; Of serving him alone, without bowing to graven Images, to provoke him to Jealousy; Of Addressing to him, thro' the alone Mediation of Jesus Christ, the One Mediator that he has appointed betwixt God and Man; without affronting him, by joining other Intercessors with him.*

O sing Praises, sing Praises to our God; sing Praises to our King ---- Sing ye Praises with Understanding.

3. But lastly, and to conclude: Let us imitate our Apostle, in raising (from Experiences of past and present Deliverances) a Ground of Trust and Confidence in God for future ones; that he that has begun a

good Work, and hitherto continued it, will (in his own Time) perfect it: --- Who deliver'd us, says S. Paul, from so great a Danger, and doth deliver: in whom we therefore trust that he will yet deliver us.

And certainly a well-grounded Trust was, and a very reasonable Inference: For there is no Pretence for Diffidence or Distrust, where there is not a Suspicion of Want either of Power, or Will to help: But what Room can there be for such a Suspicion of him, who hath given, and doth give, past and present Demonstrations of both? Let then what God has done, and now does for us, strengthen our Faith, and confirm our Hope in him for the Time to come. Away with all distrustful Murmurings, unreasonable Jealousies, and desponding Fears: By the good Things he has wrought for us already, where we rejoice, he has given us fair Pledges, we ourselves do not obstruct his intended Mercies, of further and greater yet. Allet us but chearfully do our Duties, and then we may rest assured, that God's Arm is not shortned, nor are his Bowels straightned. His Arm is as mighty as ever to bring Salvation, and he as tenderly and compassionately inclin'd towards his People; and that will not fail to complete his Work, and make

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Deliverance perfect, when he sees such a Deliverance fit for us, and us fit for it.

Till when, let us, with unshaken Faith, cast our Eyes upon him, from whence cometh our Help; and let us expect, and wait for our Salvation. But let us wait in a just Sense, and grateful Acknowledgment of what he has already wrought for us, and in a cheerful Co-operation with him: Not presumptuously expecting to be always saved by Miracles, and doing nothing to help ourselves; but zealously concurring with those Methods which his Providence has pointed out for our future Safety, in a hearty Obedience and Conformity to his Reveal'd Will, and entire Submission to his Secret one, and an absolute Designation of ourselves, and all our Concerns, to his Wise and Gracious Management; Possessing our Souls in Patience, till his Time comes. O tarry the Lord's Leisure; Be strong, and he shall comfort your Hearts, all ye that put your Trust in the Lord. For the Vision is yet for an appointed Time; but at the End it shall speak, and not lie: Tho' it tarry, yet wait for it; for it will surely come, it will not tarry. And in that Day it shall be said, This is our God; we have waited for him: This is the Lord; we have waited for him. We will be glad, and rejoice in his Salvation.



A SERMON Preached in the Cathedral Church of SARUM, on Sunday, July 23. 1716. at the ASSIZE held there.

ACTS II. 47. latter Part.

— *And the Lord added to the Church daily, such as should be saved.*



THE Word Church having, of late especially, been so much talked of, and so little understood: The Romanists having confined it to their Communion, and excluded all others from all Pre-
sence to it; and some among us having, out of a pretended, or one would rather hope, mistaken Zeal for our Church, gone into such Measures for the Preservation, as too evidently tend to the Destruction of it, having by their loud Clamours of imaginary Dan-
gers

pers, brought it into real ones. It may not be unreasonable, to settle the Notion of the Word Church, and to prove against the Romanists, that we of the Reformed Church of England, are Members of a True and a Pure Church, according to the Scripture Account of a Church; and thence to excite those of our Communion to Thankfulness to God, for bestowing and continuing so great a Blessing to us; and also to point out to them, the true Methods of preserving it, and transmitting it to our Posterity; what Things are to be done, and what avoided by them, in order to that End. And this I shall take Occasion to attempt, from the Text before me.

In this Chapter, we have an Account of *St. Peter's* Excellent Sermon on the Day of Pentecost; of the great Subject, and of the glorious Success of it. His great Design was to prove to the *Jews*, the great and fundamental Article of the Christian Religion; That *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom they had crucified, and God had raised from the Dead, was the *Messias* or the *Christ*. This he demonstrates, both from the Prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the *Messias*, which he shews, had their Accomplishment in *Jesus*, and also from the Miracles which God had wrought by him in the midst of them.

This

This Discourse had so good an Effect upon the Hearers, that that Day there were Three thousand converted and baptized: And of these, with the former Disciples, continuing stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers, it is said in my Text, that *the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.*

Now this is the first Account that we meet with in the Bible, of a Christian Church being. Our Saviour had foretold that he would build a Church, but we read not of one till now. This therefore being the truly Primitive Church, we may best learn from her, what are the Characters of a Christian Church, or the Requisites to constitute one. This Society is styled by the Holy Ghost *The Church*; the Lord added to the Church, and a Church in which Salvation was to be obtained, for the Lord added daily such as *should be saved*: And therefore we may conclude, that where-ever the Characters, by which this first Church is described, are to be found, there is the True Church; and if she corrupts not herself, by receiving any destructive Additions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, or Rules of Life, a Church in which Salvation is ordinarily to be had.

That

That which I shall endeavour in my present Discourse upon these Words, shall be,

I. To enquire briefly, what are the Characters of, or Requisites to constitute a Christian Church, according to the Description of this first Apostolical Church.

II. To shew, that those Characters and Requisites agree to, and are to be found in the Reform'd Church of *England*, of which we are Members; and that she receives no Additions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, or Rules of Life, which may destroy or corrupt them.

And then the Business of my Application shall be,

1st, To excite your Thankfulness to God; for planting very early a True Christian Church in this Island; for wonderfully Reforming it, after it had been desperately corrupted with Superstition and Idolatry; for delivering it from the frequent and dangerous Plots and Attempts of our Popish Adversaries; and for continuing it pure to our Times.

2^{dly}, To persuade you to those Things; which are necessarily required on our parts, in order to the continuing of this great Blessing

sing to us; and the transmitting it to our
Posterity.

First, I am to enquire briefly, what are the Characters of, or Requisites to constitute True Christian Church, according to the Description of this first Apostolical Church.

Now this Church was a certain Number of Persons, consisting of some Apostles, some former Disciples and new Converts, which repented, believed, and were baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ; and continued in Hearing the Word preached, receiving the Sacraments, and joining in Publick Prayers. So that all the Requisites to make a True Church, that we learn from hence, are these:

1. That it be a Society of Persons consisting of Pastors duly qualified and commission'd for the Work of the Ministry, as the Apostles were; and of People baptized into, and professing the Faith of Jesus Christ.

2. That the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles be taught and profess'd among them.

3. That the Sacraments of Christ's Institution be duly administered and received.

And,

Lastly,

Lastly, That they have a Publick Worship, wherein they jointly present their Prayers to God.

If then in This Church there is, *1st*, A lawful Ministry; if, *2dly*, The whole Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, be profess'd and taught in it; if, *3dly*, The Sacraments of his Institution be duly administred; if, *lastly*, There be a Publick Worship for us to join in, agreeable to the Scriptures; then are all the Requisites to make a True Church, to be found in ours. And that we have all these Requisites in our Church, I am now to prove.

1. I say we have a lawful Ministry; our Bishops and Priests are True Bishops and Priests, who received Imposition of Hands from such as were qualified to lay Hands upon them, and their Orders valid. And this our Adversaries cannot deny, without denying, at the same time, their own Succession and Orders: For those Holy Bishops, whom God was pleased to make use of, for the Reformation of our Church, did receive their Orders from those that were of the Church of Rome; and from those blessed Reformers, our Bishops and Priests derive their Succession. So that if they of the Church of Rome have any true Succession from the Apostles, as they assert, and any
good

good Orders; our Succession likewise (if it can but make it good since the Reformation which certainly is no difficult thing) must equally true; and our Orders equally vail and consequently we have a Lawful Ministry.

Secondly, In our Church is profess'd and taught the whole Doctrine of Christ, and the Apostles. And this must certainly be true, the Holy Scriptures and the three Antient Creeds contain the Doctrine; for these the Church receives and owns; and not only but willingly embraces any thing else that can be made out to be of Apostolical Tradition, and universally received in all Ages of the Church. But as for Traditions of later Date, and which have been only received in a Part of the Church, which have no Foundation in, but are rather repugnant to the Scriptures; these she cannot by any means allow to be of equal Authority with the Scriptures, nor dares she receive them as such. And yet she cannot, upon this Account, be justly taxed, as wanting any Part of Christ or his Apostles Doctrine; since the Reason why she receives not these, is, because she cannot find that Christ or his Apostles ever taught them, but rather the contrary. Therefore for Instance; We do not believe nor teach

you, that the Pope of Rome is the Head and Governor of the whole Church; and the Reason is, because we find no Mention thereof in the Scripture, nor of any other Head of the Church than Christ, who, in the 1st Ch. of the *Epheſians*, is ſaid to be *the Head over all Things to the Church, which is his Body*: and again, the 1st of *Coloff*. *He is the Head of the Body, the Church.*

Thus, likewise, we do not believe nor teach you, that the Substance of Bread and Wine in the Sacrament is, by Consecration, changed into the Substance of Christ's Natural Body and Blood: Nor does the Scripture teach any ſuch thing; which assures us, that Christ's Body is in Heaven, and there must be till the Restitution of all Things, and consequently cannot be upon the Altar; and also expreſſy calls the Elements, Bread and Wine, after Consecration. And as for that Expression of our Saviour's, upon which this pretended Change is founded, namely, the Words of Institution, *This is my Body*; it cannot be ſuppoſed, that either our Saviour intended, or the Apostles understood them in the Literal Sense. For, for him whilst he was alive, in the midst of them, to take into his Hands, and give them his Natural Body and Blood, to be bruised with their Teeth, and eaten, drank, and swallowed

into their Bellies; and yet this same Body at the same time and after, to remain alive and sound, and whole, without any the least visible Change; For that whole and entire Body, with the Blood in his Veins, to be the broken Body and Blood shed, which was not broken or shed till the Day after, was surely a prodigiously strange Thing, as could not but have raised Scruples in Persons less able to make Objections than the Apostles were wont to be, in Matters of less Difficulty and yet neither do we find them raising, nor our Saviour preventing or answering any. So that we cannot imagine, that he either meant or they apprehended any other Sense of his Words, than that plain and easy one, which other Expressions of the like Nature, that are frequent in Scripture, do, by our Adversaries own Confession, carry along with them; as when the Rock is said to be Christ, and the Cup the New Testament in his Blood; namely, a Figurative Sense: To wit, that it was the Type, or Figure, or Representation of it. And this any one will the more easily believe who considers the Expressions that were used in the Jewish Passover, to which this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper succeeds; and how in this, as well as other Cases, our Lord was pleased to accommodate his Instructions

tutions, as near as might be, to the Ceremonies and Phrases used among the Jews. Now in their Paschal Feast, the Master of the House took Bread and brake it, and gave it to them, saying, *This is the Bread of Affliction, which our Fathers eat in Egypt.* Our Saviour, in his Institution, takes Bread and breaks it, and gives it to them, saying, *This is my Body which is broken for you.* As then that Bread which the Jews took, and said of it, *This is the Bread of Affliction,* &c. was not that very Bread, which their Fathers had eaten so long ago, but was only intended for the Type or Figure of it: So neither could the Apostles, who were Jews, and acquainted with this Phrase or Way of Speaking, understand that Bread which our Lord held in his Hand, and of which he said, *This is my Body which is broken for you,* to be that real Body of his, which they then saw before them whole at the Table; but the Type and Figure of that Body, which was shortly to be broken for them upon the Cross.

We do not believe nor teach you, that there is in the Mass, or Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, a true proper Sacrifice, propitiatory for the Sins of the Quick and Dead: But yet we cannot think we want any thing in this Point, which the Scripture teaches;

which has most expressly asserted, that Christ is, and can be offer'd but once; and has given us these Reasons for it: 1st, That one Offering was sufficient, because by that *he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified*. 2dly, That Christ must often have suffered, if he were often offered; for without Suffering, no true Offering; *without Shedding of Blood, no Remission.*

We neither believe nor teach you such a third Place in another Life as Purgatory, wherein those that have repented, and to whom the eternal Punishment of their Sin is remitted, must yet suffer such Pains, as differ not from Hell in Agony, but Duration only, till they have paid the Remainder of that Debt of Temporal Pain, which was not paid in this Life by their Satisfaction, and which they therefore owe: But in this we think we want not any thing that the Scripture has made necessary, which informs us but of two Places after this Life, the one proper to the Elect and Blessed of God, the other proper to the Damn'd; and which assures us, that those *that die in the Lord, are blessed from thenceforth, in that they rest from their Labours.*

We teach you not, that there is a Stock of Merits in the Church; which being applied will be beneficial to the freeing you from
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Temporary Punishments, and to the speedy releasing of you from Purgatory. We require not your Money (pardon us this Wrong) for Masses and Indulgences for that Purpose.

These, and several other Doctrines held in the Church of *Rome*, indeed we have not in ours: But yet they being such as are grounded upon no Warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to it, we cannot, for wanting them, be said to be deficient in the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles; by whom whatsoever Doctrines have been delivered, whether they be contained in the Scriptures, summ'd up in the Three Creeds, or handed down by universal Tradition, we readily own and embrace. And as we have this second Requisite, the whole Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, so also have we the

3d, Namely, The Sacraments of Christ's Institution duly administer'd. We have those of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as well as they of the Church of *Rome*; the former more agreeably administer'd to the Patterns in Scripture, and the latter more entire than they have. And for those other Five which they call Sacraments, Confirmation, Orders, Marriage, Penance, Extreme Unction; as to the four former of them, tho' we give them not

the Name of Sacraments, yet we have the Things. As for Confirmation, our Church has appointed an Office particularly for it, and has a Rubrick enjoining Children, so soon as they are come to competent Age, and instructed in the Lord's Prayer, Creed, Ten Commandments, and the Catechism, to be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, to take upon themselves the Vow that was made in their Names at their Baptism, to have the Bishop lay his Hands upon them, and pray over them. As for Holy Orders, we have it in great Veneration: We think no one capable of exercising the Ministry, till he be commission'd to it, by a lawful Imposition of Hands: We hold it to be the Bishop's Part to ordain: We have the Three Orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, which have been in the Church from the Apostles Time. As for Marriage we acknowledge it to be, what the Apostle says, *Honourable in all Men*, in Priests as well as Laymen; and we have a Grave and Reverend Form appointed in our Liturgy for the Solemnization of it. And then for Penance, this we have likewise, tho' we do not exact from you a particular Confession of all your most private Faults to a Priest, as of Necessity, in order to the Forgiveness of them, tho' we do not send you on tedious Pilgrimages

images to this or that Saint, to go bare-headed or bare-footed, to say over so many *Pater-Nosters* or *Ave-Maries*, to cut and lash your Bodies for the Sins of your Souls; yet does our Church refuse no sort of Confession, either Publick or Private, that may be necessary to the quieting of Mens Consciences, or to the exercising of that Power, of Binding and Loosing, which our Lord has left to his Church. But now, tho' our Church has these Four Things, yet can she not allow them to be Sacraments, as are Baptism and the Lord's Supper; nor in the strict Notion of the Word in which she takes it; they either not being of Christ's Institution, not necessary to Salvation, or not generally necessary to all. As for the Fifth, that of Extreme Unction, indeed we have it not, nor see any Reason for it. It is, as in Use among them, an anointing of sick Persons with Oil, consecrated for the Purpose, for the Benefit of their Souls: And this they ground upon that of *S. James*, *If any Man be sick, let him send for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with Oil in the Name of the Lord; and the Prayer of Faith shall save the Sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.* But this Anointing referring, as is evident, to the Health of the Body, and to those miraculous Gifts of Healing, which

the Apostles and first Christians were endued with, and the Cures they wrought by such Anointing; and that miraculous Power of Healing being long since ceased, we cannot look upon these Words to contain in them the Institution of a Sacrament, nor the Ceremony of Anointing to belong to us.

But what of this Advice does belong to us, we fail not to obey: Our Church advises the Sick to send for the Elders of the Church to unburden their Consciences to them, if they find them troubled with any weighty Matter; the Elders pray over the Sick for the Restoration of their Bodily Health, if God sees good, but chiefly for the Salvation of their Souls; and by the Ministry of God's Word, they give them ghostly Advice and Comfort, and Absolution, if they humbly and heartily desire it, for the Ease and Quiet of their Minds. So that whatsoever of these Seven we can find any Warrant for in Scripture, our Church has, as well as the Church of Rome; tho' we give the Name of Sacraments only to two of them; those two only being appointed by Christ, as generally necessary to Salvation.

Lastly, We have a Publick Worship to join in, agreeable to the Scriptures: The Fourth and Last Requisite we mentioned, to make a true Church. And what Part of

Prayer

Prayer has not our indulgent Mother plentifully provided for her Children in her Liturgy? Are there not meek and humble Confessions of Sins, and those as full as could be contrived for the whole Church to join in? Are there not most earnest and devout Supplications for Pardon, pathetic Requests for particular Graces, submissive Petitions for Temporal Blessings, comprehensive Intercessions for others, even our very Enemies, for all Men Seraphical Hymns, and Pious Thanksgivings?

Has she not provided for the Solemnity and Order of her publick Administrations, by appointing Ceremonies, for their Number few, for their Nature decent and edifying? Indeed, she has not that vast Number of ridiculous Ceremonies, which are burdensome, and rather conduce to the taking of the Mind from what it should attend to, than serve to Decency and Edification; she has none of that dumb Shew, and Pageantry of Devotion, which is to be seen in the Church of Rome, which seems not agreeable to those Worshipers, that should worship *God in Spirit and in Truth*. She has no Prayers in her Service in an unknown Tongue, which can only amuse the Congregation, and which they cannot join in; but surely she is not upon

upon this Account defective in her Worship if *S. Paul's* Judgment may be taken.

She has no Addresses to the Blessed *Virgin* and to *Saints*; but yet neither is her Worship defective in this Respect, if the Scriptures may be our Rule herein, wherein neither Command, nor one Example, in the Old and New Testament, for offering up the Sacrifice of Prayer and Thanksgiving to any but God, but many Prohibitions of such Worship. We refuse not that Respect which is due to the Blessed *Virgin*, and *Saints* departed; we call her Blessed according to her own Prediction; we honour the Memory of *Saints*, name them at our Altars, bless God for the Excellencies that shined in them, and beg for Grace to imitate their Examples: But we dare not, by praying to them, give them that Worship which God has incommunicably reserved to himself; and which if they were sensible of, and we could hear their Replies, they would certainly forbid with a *see you do it not*.

We give not any Worship to Images; we cannot think our Church defective in this, as long as the Second Commandment, however it be left out in many of the Offices of the *Roman Church*, stands unexpunged in the Sacred Leaves of the Bible. In a Word, our whole Worship is so ordered, that there is nothing

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nothing wanting in it for the perfecting of the
 Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the
 edifying of the Body, till we all come in the
 Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of
 the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the
 Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ.

If then these Characters of a true Church
 agree to ours; if, as I have shew'd, she has
 Succession of Bishops as certain as Rome
 herself; if Pastors and Teachers duly quali-
 fied and ordained; if she holds the whole
 Faith and Doctrine of Christ and his Apo-
 stles; if she has all the Sacraments of Christ's
 Appointment, and those entire; if she has a
 Liturgy most agreeable to the Primitive
 Worship, then are all the Requisites to make
 a true Church to be found in her.

And as she is not defective in any thing
 required to make her a true Church, so does
 she not abound with any thing that can make
 her a corrupt or unsound one. She requires no
 Propositions to be believed, which must be
 false, if we can be assured that any thing
 else is true; none that offer Violence to our
 Reason, overthrow the plainest Evidence of
 our Senses, destroy the Truth of Christ's
 natural Body, and invalidate the Force of
 his Miracles; none that impeach his Cha-
 racter, as the Messias, by implying a Failure
 in his Discharge of the Offices which belong'd
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to him as such; none that thwart the Purpose of his Manifestation, by encouraging Sin, which he came to destroy. She presumes not to dispense with any Part of her Institutions, nor does she audaciously pretend to make any Additions to them. She does not in her Worship provoke God to Jealousy by giving his Honour to Graven Images; she affronts not our One Mediator, by joining others with him; nor does she amuse the People with Ministrations in a strange Tongue in which they cannot tell, whether they are blessing God, or cursing Men. In short, she imposes no Terms of Communion, either as to Faith or Practice, upon her Members which are not reconcileable with the Scriptures. All which I could easily make out but as Time will not allow, so neither is it necessary to enlarge on this Head, either on the Account of her Adversaries, (whose great Charge against us, is not so much for our Positive Doctrines, as for our Negative Articles; not so much for what we do hold and practise, as for what we do not hold and practise;) or on your Account, before whom I speak, from whom, I trust, none of these Things are hid.

Now if these Things are so, then as our Church is a true Christian Church, as having all the Characters by which the first Christi-

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ian Church was described ; so is she a Pure Church, as having received no Addition in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, or Rules of Life, which may corrupt her : Which was the Point I undertook to prove, and am now to apply. And,

1st, I am to excite your Thankfulness to God, for planting very early a True Christian Church in this Island ; for wonderfully reforming it, after it had been desperately corrupted with Superstition and Idolatry ; for frequently preserving it so reformed, from being again over-run with them ; and for mercifully continuing it pure down to our Times.

And Pure indeed our Church at this Time is ; most agreeable to the Scriptures, are the Religion and Worship, professed and exercised in our Communion : But it was not always so with us. We are now, blessed be his Name, *Light in the Lord*, but *were some time Darkneſs*. God indeed did viſit us early with the glorious Light of his Goſpel, which did open upon our *British* Anceſtors, moſt probably in the very Time of the Apoſtles. But when that *Cloud*, which aroſe upon the Diſſolution of the *Roman* Empire, at firſt, indeed, *little like a Man's Hand*, did by degrees ſpread itſelf, ſo that almoſt the whole

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Western Heaven was darkned; we were covered with that Midnight Blackness: And for many Ages did our Ancestors grope in the thick Darkness of Popish Error, Superstition and Idolatry, in which a great Part of *Christianity* continues to this Day. But it pleased God to raise up our Holy Reformers, who taking Heed to that sure Word of Prophecy, the Holy Scriptures, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place; He did, by their Means, make the Day to dawn again upon us. They discovered those Absurdities in Doctrine, Corruptions in Discipline, Superstition and Idolatry in Worship, which Avarice and Ambition had, during their Hour, and the Power of Darkness, the Times of Ignorance I mean, introduced into the Church: They rooted up, in a good Measure, those Tares which the Enemy had sown in the Night while Men slept; and secured the good Corn. They overthrew the Tables, and drove out of the Temple the Money-Changers, those impious Barterers for Sins, and restored the House of God to its Primitive Use, to be a House of Prayer, where he should be worshipped in Spirit and Truth.

The Evil Spirit being thus ejected, 'twas no Wonder that he walked through dry Places seeking Rest, and found none, till he could return to the House whence he came out; and

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was not very long, after it was Swept and Garnished, before he found an Opportunity, upon the suspected Death of that Pious young Prince, King *Edward* the VIth, to come again into it. And indeed he came with as great *Wrath*, as if he had known that he had but a short Time. The Number of Bishops, of Ministers, of Laity of both Sexes, who perished by their hard Usage in Prison, or were burnt at the Stake, under the succeeding Queen, for the Sake of their Religion, was so great, that we may accommodate the Words of our Saviour, in relation to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, to those Times, that except those Days had been shortned, there should no Protestant have been saved or escaped; but for the Elects Sake, those Days were shortned, and God put an End to that Persecution with that Reign.

Upon the Succession of our glorious *Elizabeth* to the Throne, the Reformation revived, and was carried on to Perfection: And notwithstanding the many secret Conspiracies, and open Attempts of the *Romish* Faction, encouraged by the Pope, and assisted by Princes of that Communion, to destroy it, God preserved our Holy Religion in its Purity to this Nation, during the long and Happy Reign of that Queen, during that of her Successor, and so many Years of that of his

his Son; till being provoked by our Sins, he permitted an unnatural Civil War to break out in the Kingdom, which ended not but with the Subversion of the Government, the Destruction of the Church, and the execrable Murder of the King.

From that Time indeed, our *Jerusalem* seemed to be an Heap of Stones buried in Ruins, and very unlikely to rise again into that beautiful Building which it had been; but God was pleased in Judgment to remember Mercy, to turn our Captivity, and Comfort us again, for the Time in which he had plagued us, by restoring King Charles II. the Royal Family, and with them our Government and Church. And whatever Inclinations to Popery, some of that Family might have brought Home with them; whatever Interest and Power some known or disguised Papists might have had at that Time; whatever Designs were laid here; whatever Measures were concerted with the great Enemy of the Protestant Religion Abroad; whatever cunning Artifices were used, whatever Force was intended to be used, to bring Popery back again hither; God over-ruled and disappointed them all: And our Reformed Church and Holy Religion were preserved to us during that Reign.

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What happened in the succeeding one, I need not recount: You must remember, you cannot forget the large Steps that were then taken, to root out the *Northern* Heresy, to bring this Church under the Tyranny of the Bishop of *Rome*; what dreadful Apprehensions we all had of an impending Ruin, *our Hearts even failing us for Fear, and for looking after those Things which we thought were then coming upon us.* But God again raised up a Deliverer for us, and by the safe and seasonable Arrival of his late Majesty, of Glorious Memory, among us, brought about that happy Revolution; to which, however, ungrateful People, ungrateful to God as well as Man, vility or condemn it, We, under God, owe the Enjoyment, not only of our Civil Rights, but of our Reform'd Establish'd Religion, for Twenty seven Years backwards; that we have our present Gracious King upon the Throne; that the Succession is settled in a Protestant Family; that under Him and them, if we do not by our Sins and Follies hinder so great a Blessing, we and our Posterity may worship God in the Beauty of Holiness, in the Communion of the Church of *England*, for many Generations. And do not these Mercies of God, call for a grateful Acknowledgment from us? Alas! without those gracious Interpositions

of Providence, we had still fate, as our Popish Ancestors did heretofore, *in Darkness and the Shadow of Death.* 'Tis of his tender Mercy, that the Day Spring from on High hath visited us, that we are called out of that Darkness, into his marvellous Light; that instead of having the Scripture, that Light to our Feet, shut up from us; instead of being muffled up in an implicit Faith, and blind Obedience; of being obliged to contradict our Senses, to believe against Reason, and pray without Understanding; to invoke those as Saints, of whom some never were in the World, and others were Scandals to it; to give Divine Worship to Images and Relicks, and a Piece of Bread: We have the free Use of the Bible in our own Tongue; have no Doctrines imposed upon our Faith; no Duties in our Practice, but what the Scriptures plainly teach, and impartial Reason must approve; have all our Worship administered in a Language we understand; have all our Addresses offered up to God, through the only Mediation of the one Mediator betwixt God and Man, Christ Jesus; and all our Religious Worship paid to him, to whom alone it is due, the Lord our God, whom only we must serve. These, and all other the inestimable Benefits of the Reformation, and Blessings which we now enjoy in the Com-

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Union of this Church, are owing to the Grace and Bounty of our Merciful God; and if we have a just Sense of them, we shall not want any farther Arguments, to engage us to shew our unfeigned Thankfulness to him for them: Nor, in the second place,

2. To persuade us to those things, which are necessarily required on our Parts, in order to the continuing of this great Blessing to us, and the transmitting it to our Posterity. And they are,

1st, An hearty Concern for, and a zealous Endeavour, in our several Capacities, to secure His present Majesty's Government, and the Succession of this Crown in His Illustrious Protestant Family.

It is just Matter of Wonder and Amazement, that after so many repeated Oaths, wherewith the Subjects of this Kingdom have engaged themselves to God and the King, that they will bear Faith and true Allegiance to His Majesty; that him they will defend against the *Pretender*, whom they have solemnly abjur'd, and all his Adherents; it should be needful to urge any other Motives, besides that of the sacred Obligation of an Oath, to persuade them to do that, which they have, in the most awful Manner, called God to Witness that they would do. But here is the Obligation of Interest, added

to that of an Oath, upon all true Members of our Church; the Safety and Happiness, nay the very Being whereof, under God, depends upon the Preservation of His Majesty's Government, and the Succession of the Crown in His Royal House. Enquire into the Time of your Fathers, ask of the Nations round about, whether ever a Popish Prince did protect a Protestant Church; nay, whether they have not always endeavoured, when they have had Power to do it, to extirpate Protestants out of their Dominions, that the very Name of them might not be had in Remembrance. This is what their Religion obliges them to do, under Pain of Anathemas and Excommunications here, and Damnation hereafter.

This is our present Case. We have a King upon the Throne, adorned with all the Virtues that can recommend a Gracious Prince to a Wise People; One that lives in constant Communion with our Church; that has given His Royal Word and Oath to protect and encourage it; and has never omitted giving Proofs of his Sincerity, whenever any Occasion has offered, of shewing His Kindness and Favour to it: One, who is blessed with a Flourishing Royal Issue, under whom we may hope the great Blessings may be trans-

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a Christian Church.

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mitted to our Posterity, which we enjoy under him.

On the other side, here has been a Rebellion rais'd to dethrone His Majesty, and set up a *Pretender*; one that has suck'd in the Principles of Popery and Tyranny with his Milk; been educated in the cruel Maxims of *Rome* and *France*, and is oblig'd, by his Religion, to destroy the *Northern* Heresy, particularly the Bulwark of it, the Church of *England*. And if he succeeds, we have in View a long Train of Popish Princes after him, to perfect what he shall have left undone of that blessed Work.

God has indeed been pleas'd to give Success to His Majesty's Counsels and Forces, and to deliver up the Men that lifted up their Hands against our Lord the King. But tho' the Rebels have been defeated, is the Spirit of Rebellion suppress'd? Has His Majesty's unparallel'd Clemency soften'd the Hearts of his Enemies; or have the few Examples of Justice that have been made, struck any Terror into them? Has not the former been imputed to Cowardice and Fear; and have not the latter been called Acts of Cruelty and Tyranny? Is there not Reason to believe, that tho' the Traytors appear not now in the Field, they are yet plotting in their private Cabals? Do we not every Day see the Results of their

dark Councils, in the vile Methods that are used to keep up a Ferment in the Nation by most monstrous Lyes and infamous Libels by wearing Marks of Distinction, by Tumults and Riots; and that even in the Metropolis, where His Majesty was residing, and the Parliament sitting? What can be the Meaning of such Audaciousness, but to keep up the Spirit of their Party here, and encourage their Friends abroad? And what is all that for, but that both may be ready, upon a favourable Opportunity, to make another Attempt against our present Settlement, and in it against our Established Church? And if this be the Case, can there be a Doubt how Protestants, how Church-of-England-Men ought to behave themselves in such a Conjunction? Can we pretend to have any Value for our Religion, and not to act to the utmost of our Capacities for the Defence of it, in Opposition to one, who, if ever he be settled here, must destroy it? Ought we not to express at least as much Zeal for the Preservation of our happy Constitution, where we have the Government, the Laws, and, I trust, God himself on our side, as our Enemies, in Defiance to all these, have shewn and do shew for the Subversion of it? Let not any one think, that Caution and Reserve will be of any Advantage to him, in ca

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the Pretender should prevail; no, the timorous Neuters, and even the wicked Abettors of his Cause, will share the same Fate with those that honestly and bravely oppose it: His Zeal, his Revenge, will know no more Distinction, than the barbarous Duke D'Alva's Sword did in the *Low-Countries*: There can be no Merit in Protestants; Hereticks, let them behave themselves how they will, are Hereticks still; and if they intend to continue such, they must resolve to suffer as such.

We have had but two Popish Reigns, openly avow'd to be such, since the Reformation, and they have both proved the Truth of this Observation: In both of them, those Protestants who had been most forward and zealous in bringing those Princes to the Throne, were the first that found Cause to repent of their Folly and Madness. Let us then shew ourselves Rational Creatures, endow'd with Understanding and Courage, that God has not given us the Spirit of Fear or Stupidity, but of *Power and of Love, and of a sound Mind*. God has visibly and wonderfully appear'd for us, and what then need we fear who are against us? Let us resolutely do our Duties, in our respective Stations, for the strengthening of the Hands of the Government, and the disheartning all the Enemies

of it; and let us, in our daily Addresses to God, beg of him to look upon the Face of his Anointed; to protect his Person, and all his Royal Family; to preside in his Councils and go forth with his Armies; to establish the Thing that he hath wrought for us; that under him and his Royal Issue, this Church may long and joyfully serve God, in all godly Quietness. This is the First.

2. The Second Duty required of us is, carefully to avoid all Factions and Divisions among ourselves. *An House or a Kingdom divided against itself,* our Saviour has told us, *cannot stand, but is brought to Desolation*; and it is most equal and just in God, to suffer those who, contrary to his Commands, are biting and devouring one another, to be consumed one of another. This would be the Case of a Society, distracted with Parties and Factions, tho' they had no common Enemy to deal with: Their mutual Animosities, and intestine Divisions, would undo them without any foreign Help. But how much more certain must the Ruin of that Body be, who, having a powerful and implacable Enemy incessantly watching all Opportunities to attack them, regardless of their common Danger, instead of uniting Hearts and Hands to oppose the Enemy and defend them-

themselves, shall turn their Arms upon one another, and assist their Enemy to destroy them all?

The Church of *England* has all along been the Object, against which the Church of *Rome* has formed her deepest Designs, and exerted her greatest Force, as being the chief Barrier of the Reformation; which being once broke thro', the other Parts of it would not be able to hold out long against her. She finds that Argument will not do, all the Topicks from Scripture, Antiquity, and Reason, being on our side: She has try'd open Force and secret Plots, and they have not succeeded: She has moved her Attacks from one Side to another, as *Balak* took *Balaam* from Hill to Hill to curse *Israel*: She has cursed us at her Altars; but how could those Curses hurt them, whom God hath blessed? Yet she has one Method left, more effectual than her Swords, or Powder, or Anathema's; and that is, to serve us as the *Philistines* did *Sampson*: His Strength lay in his Hair; and when they had corrupted a treacherous *Dalilah* to discover where his great Strength lay, and to lull him asleep on her Lap till his Head was shaven, his Strength went from him, and he became weak like other Men; they made Sport with him, and he perished with them.

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My Brethren, our Strength, under God lies in our Unity, and this our Enemies know they need not employ Spies to discover in though they do many Agents to intoxicate us with their Philters into a stupid Security or rather fatal Lethargy, while they deprive us of our Strength, by breaking us into Parties; the Consequence of which, if we awaken not in time, must be, that we shall become first their Derision, and then their Prey. They will first insult us, and then destroy us.

If then we have any Respect for our Church let us guard ourselves against these treacherous Endeavours of our Enemies to ruin it, by dividing the Members of it. Let all distinguishing Names, particularly that ridiculous and senseless one of *High-Church* and *Low Church*, be for ever forgotten. We all believe the same Articles of Faith, agree in the same Rules of Practice, join in the same Worship, communicate in the same Sacraments submit to the same Discipline; What Foundation is there then for a Distinction of the Members of this Church, that has any Difference to support it? Let us convince our Enemies, that we truly love and value the Church of *England*, and prefer her Safety to any private Considerations; that in vain the Net is spread in the Sight of any Bird

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that we see through their Artifices, and are sensible of their wicked Designs; that as they cannot force us, they shall not trick us out of our Religion; that whatever little Differences there may be among us as to other Matters, we are resolved to unite, as one Man, in the Defence of that. Were all the Members of this Church thus at Unity among themselves, she would not need to fear the Gates of *Rome*, or of Hell, especially, if we would,

3. In the last place, be persuaded to that which is the most likely way to prevail with God to continue this invaluable Blessing to us, and transmit it to our Posterity; and that is, to endeavour to walk worthy of it, by adorning our Holy Profession with an Holy Conversation. The Conditions upon which the Continuance of all Spiritual Blessings is suspended, are the making a right Use and Improvement of them; and the greater those Vouchments are, the greater Returns will be expected: And if we do not answer God's Expectations, we may justly fear that he will verify upon us, what Christ threatened to the *Jews*, That he will take away the Kingdom of Heaven from us, and give it to a Nation that shall bring forth the Fruits thereof.

What

What Enemies then are all such to this Church, who pretend to be Members of her, and yet lead Lives that would bring a Scandal upon the loosest Religion? Profess a mighty Zeal for her, but shew it chiefly in talking and debauching for her? How much more effectually would such, if they resolve to continue in their wicked Courses, shew their Kindness to the Church, by renouncing her Communion? An open Enemy may be better borne, and more easily guarded against than such false Friends, who treat the Church as *Judas* did his Master, pretend to kiss her, and cry, Hail, when they are treacherously betraying her to the Insults of her Enemies and the Judgments of God.

My Brethren, if we would engage God to preserve this Church to us, let us express our Love and Zeal, not so much in *Talking*, as in *Living* for her: Let us shew the Excellency of her Constitution above that of any other, by the Influence it has upon her Members; by its making us more Holy and Just, more Temperate and Meek, more Humble and Charitable, more Eminent in all Christian Graces, than others. This would be the Way to prevail with God, to continue to hedge, and fence, and secure this Vineyard, when he shall see the Charge he has been at, turn to so good Account; the

the Manuring and Cultivating he has bestowed upon it, answered by such a Crop of the Fruits of Righteousness. And this, with his Blessing, will be also the most probable Method to enlarge and strengthen her, by bringing such, as have hitherto separated from her, into the Pale of her Communion; who seeing the *Light of our good Works* shining with such a Brightness before them, may be thereby induced to join with *one Mind and Mouth with us, in glorifying our Father which is in Heaven.*



The



The whole World no Compensation for the Loss of the Soul.

A SERMON Preached at the Royal Chappel at S^t James's, on *Ash-Wednesday*, February 22, 1720.

Matt. XVI. Ver. 26.

—*What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?*



THESE Words need no critical Explanation: They are proposed interrogatively, *What is a Man profited?* but imply a strong Negation, he is not profited; and by a common Figure a great deal more, *i. e.* he is so far from

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from being profited, that he is infinitely a Loser. The Truth of which Proposition will be very apparent, by considering,

I. What is meant by *losing the Soul*?

II. What we may understand by *gaining the whole World*? And,

III. *Lastly*, by comparing both together?

I. What is meant by *losing the Soul*?

Some have endeavoured very much to lessen this Loss, from the very Expression in my Text, and some others of a like Importance, which occur in Scripture.

The Soul is here said to be lost, and elsewhere to be destroy'd, *to perish, to die*; from whence they conclude this Loss to consist in the Annihilation of the Soul, or its ceasing to be: And it must be acknowledged, that there has been too much Countenance given to this Fancy, by some Attempts that have been made to prove the Soul material, and naturally mortal. It is certain, that all those who believe the Soul's Immortality, upon the supposed Principle of its Immateriality, must, if such Attempts prove successful, be very much shaken in their Belief of its Immortality. Cicero, a Man of no slight Judgment, or weak Reasoning, has long ago given up the Point of the Soul's Immortality, if it be allow'd to be material, in his First Book of *Tusculans*: Where recounting the Opinions

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nions of some Philosophers about the Soul who thought it to be the Heart, or the Blood or the Brain; he concludes, if any of these Opinions are right, the Soul must be Corporeal, and die with the rest of the Body.

2. But it may be asked, Why so? Cannot God as well immortalize our Souls, supposing them material and naturally mortal, as our Bodies, which confessedly are so, and which he will make immortal? I answer, The Question is not about God's Power, which certainly extends to every thing which is the Object of any Power, and could as easily immortalize a Soul, if it were material, as a Body; but the Question is, Whether God has any where made a Declaration of his Will to that Purpose?

As to the Body, we are plainly told, that it is *corruptible, weak, mortal*; that as it now is, it is not capable of an eternal Inheritance in Heaven; that therefore the Bodies, not only of those that shall be dead, but of those that shall be found alive at the Coming of our Lord, must and *shall be changed*, from *corruptible to incorruptible*, from *mortal to immortal*; and that for the effecting of this wonderful Change, God will exert that *mighty Power, whereby he is able to subdue all Things unto himself.*

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But where do we find any such Account of the Soul of Man, that it is naturally corruptible and mortal, and, as such, incapable of Heavenly Glory; and that it must put on Incorruption and Immortality, and be changed according to the Working of the mighty Power of God? Had this been the Case of our Souls, God would certainly have told us so: Were they naturally mortal as our Bodies are, and necessarily to undergo such a Change as our Bodies must, a Change to be wrought by the exceeding Greatness of the Power of God; He would as plainly have revealed his Purpose in relation to our Souls, as to our Bodies. But no such Revelation is to be found in Scripture. On the contrary, the Scriptures give very different Accounts of our Souls and Bodies, when they tell us whence they come, and whither they return: God formed Man, i. e. his Body, says Moses, out of the Dust of the Ground, and breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a Living Soul: And Solomon says, that the Dust, the Body, shall return to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit or Soul shall return to God who gave it: When they tell us the Body may be killed by Man, but the Soul cannot be killed; that after their Separation, the Bodies of all Men see Corruption, putrify in the Grave, and turn to Dust, but their Souls are received into their proper Re-

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ceptacles; the Souls of the Wicked into their Prisons, and the Souls of good Men into Paradise, into Abraham's Bosom; that both exist, exercise their proper Functions, and that in some Degrees these are comforted, and the other tormented, during their separate State; and that at the last Day, when the Bodies of Men shall be raised and changed and made capable of an indissoluble Union with their respective Souls, they with their Bodies shall be perfectly and everlastingly happy or miserable. So little do the Scriptures countenance this wretched and dangerous Exposition of the Phrase, *losing the Soul*, so as to signify only Annihilation.

The Losing of the Soul implies two Things:

- I. A Privative Punishment, called the Pain of Loss: And,
- II. A Positive Punishment, called the Pain of Sense.

Both of these are expressed in the Sentence, which our Lord, who is to be our Judge, has told us he will pass upon the Wicked at the great Day of Account.

1. The first in those Words, *Depart from me, ye Cursed*: The
- 2d In those Words, *into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*.

The Pain of Loss consists in the Loss of Heaven

Heaven, and the Glories of that State; the eternal Separation from the Presence of God, and from the blessed Society of Angels and Saints, and from those ineffable, inconceivable Satisfactions, in which that happy Company shall continue to a glorious Eternity.

What those Satisfactions will be, we cannot now imagine; *it does not yet appear what we shall be*; but thus much we do know at present in general concerning them, that they will be so perfect and compleere, as not to leave Room for a Wish for more; so pure, as to admit of no Alloy; so constant, as to admit of no Interruption; so durable, as to admit of no End. For a more particular Knowledge of the Kind and Nature of them, we must wait till the *Veil shall be taken off*, and we shall be admitted *with open Face to behold the Glory of the Lord, and to see God as he is*. And then the Scales will fall from the Eyes of the Damned too; they will lift up their Eyes in Hell to behold, and their Capacities will be enlarged to conceive, and their Faculties quickned to apprehend, that exquisite Happiness, those ravishing Joys, which will be the Inheritance of the Saints in Heaven to all Eternity. But oh! wretched Knowledge, which can only make them miserable; and the clearer their Knowledge is, the greater will their Misery be. They

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see and admire what they must never enjoy the exceeding Beauty and Bliss of that glorious State, strikes them with Wonder and Desire: But alas! *there is a great Gulf between them and it*, so that *they can never pass to it*; and, which is worst of all, it is a Gulf of their own fixing. This is the aggravating Circumstance, this the severe Thought which will pierce the Heart of every one of the Damned, that that glorious Kingdom was prepared for Him; God intended him for one of the blessed Inhabitants of it; that that end sent his Son into the World, to die for, redeem, and make him capable of it; that he offered him the Glories of it, upon the most equitable and easy Terms; that he frequently called and invited him to comply with them by the Ministry of his Ambassadors, the Motions of his Spirit, and the various Methods of his Providence; But he wilfully refused all his Invitations, resisted all his Methods, neglected the great Salvation so freely tender'd to him, prefer'd to it a wretched World, which is now pass'd away, and the Fashion of it; of which nothing remains, but the sad Remembrance, that he has, for such an empty, perishing Consideration, for ever lost such a solid and durable Happiness.

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These severe Reflections, which will be ever quick and vigorous upon their Consciences, will be one Part of the Punishment of the Damned, included in the Phrase, *losing the Soul.*

The other Part of their Punishment is the Pain of Sense, which God will inflict upon all his wretched Enemies. Of the particular kind of this Punishment of the Wicked, we know no more than we do of the particular Nature of the Happiness of the Righteous. They are both represented in Scripture by Figures: *This by Crowns, Kingdoms, Treasures, Banquets, Marriage Feasts;* and that by a *gnawing Worm, burning Fire, Torments whose Smoke ascends, in which is no Rest Day or Night for ever.* As the Glory of the Righteous will be an Inheritance fit for God to provide for his Sons, so the Punishment of the Wicked will be a *Judgment worthy of God too*: As that is such as only God could prepare, for it was prepared before the *Foundation of the World*; so this will be such as only God can inflict, for he only is able to *destroy Body and Soul in Hell*: As that will be so perfect as to fill the whole Capacity of the Good Man with Joy and Pleasure, so this will be so complete, as to fill the whole Capacity of the Wicked Man with Sadness and Torments; As that will admit of no Alloy of

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Sorrow, so this will admit of no Mixture of Comfort: As there will be no Interruption of the Joys of the Righteous, so there will be no Intermission of the Pains of the Wicked: As the glorious Life of the one will be eternal, so the miserable State of the other will be everlasting.

So that now we may see what is meant by losing the Soul: A constant Remorse and Anguish of Mind, for having wilfully lost a State of most perfect Happiness, and a constant Enduring of most exquisite Misery, and both to all Eternity.

II. The 2d Enquiry is, what we are to understand by *gaining the whole World*. And I know not how to give you a better Account of this Matter, than in the Words of S. John in 1 Ep. Chap. ii. ver. 16. where he reduces *all that is in the World*, i. e. all that is valuable and desireable by the Men of the World, in which they think their Happiness consists, to three Heads, *the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life*: By the 1st are meant Sensual Pleasures, by the 2d Wealth and Riches, by the 3d Honours and Greatness.

These are the Things which worldly Men aspire to, these the Objects of their keenest Desires, their restless Thoughts, and unwearied Endeavours; to be advanced to high Stations,

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Stations, adorned with swelling Titles, and entrusted with a vast Extent of Power; to have Estates equal to their Dignity, sufficient to support the Grandeur of their Station, and assert an uncontrollable Exercise of their Power; to have at their Command all the various Objects that can invite or gratify the Sensual Appetites, and to indulge themselves in the free and unrestrained Enjoyment of them: To be advanced to this Pitch, is to gain the whole World. And how wise a Bargain he would make, who, to gain this, should lose his own Soul, we shall see in the next Particular; wherein we are,

III. To compare these together. Let us suppose an Instance of a Man that has gain'd the World; and I know not that ever there was really, or that Imagination can paint a greater, than that of Solomon, according to the Account he gives of himself in the 1st and 2d Chapters of his Ecclesiastes.

As for his Character and Station, he was not only descended from a great Prince, David, but himself a great King, reigning over a great People in the famous City of Jerusalem. As for his Riches, he gathered him Silver and Gold, and the peculiar Treasure of Kings and of the Provinces; he had great Possessions of great and small Cattel; he had Man Servants and Maid Servants, and Ser-

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vants born in his House; so that he was great and increased, more than all that were before him in Jerusalem,

As for his Pleasures, he made great Works, and built Houses, and planted Vineyards, made Gardens and Orchards, and planted Trees in them of all manner of Fruits, and made Pools of Water; he gat Men Singers and Women Singers, and the Delights of the Sons of Men, as Musical Instruments, and that of all Sorts; he gave himself up to Wine; and, in short, whatsoever his Eyes desired, he kept not from them, nor with-held his Heart from any Joy. This surely may pass for an envy'd Example, of one that had gain'd the whole World, or all that is in the World; One that had Greatness and Honour in the highest degree, Treasures of Wealth inexhaustible, Funds for Luxury of all kinds, ever ready to minister to all his Sensual Appetites; and one that let his Appetites loose, to pursue their several Objects without Restraint, and to range without Controul through the whole Circle of Voluptuous Enjoyments.

But now let us see what Judgment this very Person passes upon all his Greatness and Riches, and Pleasures, in his cooler Thoughts, when he comes to take a Review of them: And he was as well qualified to judge of them, as to experience them; he had as great Abili-

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ilities for that, as Opportunities for this; none of his Advantages as to the Goods of Body or Fortune, were superior to those of the Mind, his Knowledge and Wisdom; which, as he says, *still remained with him*, which were not quite overwhelm'd or drown'd with his Pleasures, but rose up again, and enabled him to reflect and censure, and pass a right Judgment upon them; and that was, that they were *all Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*; all Emptiness and Deceitfulness, that afforded no true Satisfaction, but by disappointing the Expectation, occasion'd much real Grief and Vexation of Mind. And this Judgment he confirms from three Considerations:

1. Because none of these things can give a Man full Satisfaction; *The Eye*, says he, *Cap. i. ver. 8. is not satisfied with seeing, nor the Ear fill'd with hearing.* There can be no true Satisfaction in any Enjoyment, where the Object is not proportion'd to the Faculty: But how scanty are all the narrow Enjoyments of this World, in respect of the large Capacity of the Mind of Man? How much of this must remain empty and unfill'd; and how much greater must the Uneasiness be, which he feels from the Want of what he desires, than the Satisfaction is which he

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he enjoys from the Possession of what he has?

2. Because the Things of this World, so far as they do reach, do rather cloy than afford a lasting Satisfaction; ver. 9. *The Thing that hath been, is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the Sun;* no great Variety to excite or carels the Appetite, only the dull Repetition of the same thing over and over again, which can only pall the Desire, and render the Enjoyment insipid.

3. Lastly, Because they are but of a short Duration; if they do not leave the Man, he must soon leave them; *One Generation* (ver. 4.) *passeth away, and another cometh; and what Profit hath a Man of all his Labour which he taketh under the Sun?* No Worldly Advantages can last longer than this Life; Life itself is very short; part of it spent, it may be, in the seeking and obtaining those Advantages; part employ'd in anxious Thoughts and solicitous Cares for the securing and preserving them; the very Part assign'd for the Enjoyment of them, disturb'd with Fears of losing them; (and the more grateful the Enjoyment, the more painful the Fears) at least with the certain Knowledge, that he must quickly be taken from them, and leave them to the Man that shall be after him;

for the Loss of the Soul. 411

him; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise Man or a Fool?

Having thus stated the Gain, let us likewise briefly state the Loss, and set one against the other, and then we shall see on which Side the Profit turns. Now does the Man which loses his Soul, lose nothing that would balance these Worldly Advantages? Yes sure. Has this World honourable Titles and high Posts to gratify the Ambition of the Man, whose Idol is the *Pride of Life*? In the other there are Honours too; not such as are here, which depend upon the uncertain Opinions of Men, who can one day cry, *Hosanna*, and another, *Crucify*; but such as consist in the Praise of God, and Acclamations of Angels. There are glorious Characters, those of Kings and Priests to God; there are Crowns and Kingdoms; not Crowns which, like those of this World, sit heavily and unsteadily upon the Heads which best deserve to wear them, but Crowns of Life and Glory, which are incorruptible; not Kingdoms which may be endangered by Force from abroad, or Commotions at home, (which it may be in the Power of a few discontented and designing Men to raise, by artfully infusing Fears and Jealousies into the Minds of a deluded unthinking People) but

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a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, the everlasting Kingdom of our God.

Has this World Riches and Estates to gratify the *Lust of the Eye*? In the other there are *Treasures* and *Inheritances* too; not such *Treasures* as *Moth* and *Rust* can corrupt, and *Thieves* may break through and steal; but *Treasures* beyond the Reach of Corruption and Violence: Not such *Inheritances* as may be wrested by Force, lost by Fraud, or squander'd away by Extravagance; but *Inheritances* eternal, incorruptible, undefiled, which pass not away.

Has this World Pleasures to gratify the *Lust of the Flesh*? In the other World, there are Pleasures too; not such indeed as are adapted to satisfy the sensual Appetites of the Natural Man, for we shall carry no such Appetites with us thither; but such as shall be abundantly able to fill the utmost Capacity of the Spiritual Man with proper and proportionable Satisfaction: Not such as will cloy, leave a Nauseating, it may be a Sting behind them, but such as will be ever new; the Desire whereof will increase by the Enjoyment, and neither Desire nor Enjoyment have end.

These are some faint Resemblances, or rather Shadows, of the new inconceivable Happiness and Glories of the other World. and

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And is the Loss of such pure, perfect, endless Satisfactions, the Price that must be paid for the empty, unsatisfying, satiating, perishing Delights of this World? What a foolish Bargain will he make, who, to obtain such a worthless transitory Possession, forfeits such a glorious and eternal Reversion; who, *to gain the whole World, loses his own Soul*; tho' no more were meant by that, but losing that happy State by the utter Extinction of the Soul.

But when the Soul cannot die, but must live for ever, under a constant Sense of that Loss, and a continual torturing Remorse for it, under the Weight of the Wrath of an Almighty offended God, and the Expression of it in such dreadful Instances, as we cannot conceive, and he only can execute; surely to *gain the whole World, by losing the Soul*, in this Sense, is downright Phrenzy and Madness.

Thus I have consider'd the Case of gaining or losing the World, or the Soul, upon a Supposition that the World and Soul are so inconsistent, that whosoever would gain or save one, must utterly lose the other. But this is not the Truth of the Case; which when we state justly, we must make the proper Abatements out of one Member of the Opposition. The two Members opposed, are
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the gaining the whole World, and losing the Soul. Now if there be any thing in the World, the gaining whereof is consistent with the saving of the Soul, that ought not to be opposed to the saving the Soul; that only ought to be opposed to the saving the Soul, which is inconsistent with the saving the Soul. Now let this be granted, which cannot be deny'd, and I will undertake to prove, that ordinarily speaking, in settled Times, and Christian Countries, where the Religion of our blessed Saviour is professed and protected, there is nothing in the World which a wise and good Man values in it, inconsistent with the saving the Soul. To make good which Proposition, these two things may be proved:

1. That the Religious Man, as such, is not debarr'd from possessing the good Things of this World: And,

2. That when he has them, he enjoys them with less Disquiet and more Satisfaction, than a wicked Man can do. And if these two things can be made out, I think we may vary the Question in the Text, and say; Nor, What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul; but, what is he profited, if he shall lose the World, and his own Soul too? But this will be too large a Subject for the small
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Remainder of that Time, which is usually allotted for Discourses of this Nature, which I shall rather beg Leave to employ in making some Reflections from what I have already said, which I hope will appear to be neither unprofitable nor unreasonable.

It is in vain to dissemble the unhappy Circumstances, which the Nation and particular Persons at this time labour under; every body complains of them, every body does in some measure feel them: And I am not against their enquiring into the Causes of them, or seeking for Methods of redressing them; but would only point out to private Christians, the proper Subjects of their Enquiries, and the most certain Means of Redress.

As to Judicial Inquisitions in this Affair; and Political Methods of curing our Miseries, these are not within the Province of private Persons, but are some of those *things that belong unto the Wise*. There are those who have proper Cognizance of such Matters, and whose proper Business it is to search into the Causes of our Malady, and apply the best Political Means of Cure; and we must trust these Matters in their Hands, and hope for the good Effects of the Integrity and Prudence of their Conduct. But give me Leave to add, there is a *melius inquirendum*,

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dum, another Inquisition to be made by private Persons; and I yet shew unto you a more excellent Way, a more sure Way of Enquiry, a more certain Way of Cure: A Way of Enquiry, in which you cannot be too strict and severe; a Way of Cure, infallible for particular Persons, and the most probable one to relieve the whole, if I can persuade you to go into it; which I should hope might be no difficult Task, if what I have advanced in the former Part of this Discourse has had any Place or Weight with you.

As to this Enquiry into the Causes of our Unhappiness, I hope I need not say to Christians, that they must not call any Evils that they feel, the casual Results of Fortune, or the necessary Effects of Second Causes, but the Dispensations of a just and merciful Providence, which directs or permits all Events for wise and good Purposes. As for National Judgments, God does more particularly claim the sending of them, as Acts of his own Prerogative, whatever Instruments he makes use of for the Execution of them.

Now the provoking Causes of all such Judgments, are the Sins of a People. Here then you see where you are to set up your Inquisition, every one in their own Breasts; and what are the proper Subjects of your Enquiry; namely, what Sins each has been

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guilty of, which have contributed to the filling up of that Measure, by which God has been provoked to send this Calamity upon us. And here let every one be as severe an Inquisitor as he can, and search with the utmost Strictness and Impartiality into the Corruption of his own Heart, and the Wickedness of his Hands. This is a suitable Employment for this solemn Season, and highly necessary in our present Circumstances.

I shall not enumerate the several Kinds of Iniquity; and particular Instances of Sin, with which this Nation and Age abound; but only mention two Generals, which are the wretched Source from whence most others flow; and they are,

I. An inordinate and immoderate *Love of this World, and the Things of it*, the Vanity of which I have endeavour'd to expose. And,

II. A wretched Neglect of those immortal Souls, the Value whereof, I have in some measure laid before you.

As to the *Love of the World, and the Things of it*, we have seen lately such extraordinary Instances of it, as can scarcely be parallel'd in past Ages, and will hardly be believed in future ones: Such an insatiable Avarice, as could not be satisfied with moderate, or the most immoderate Acquisitions: Such boundless Desires of Wealth, as seem'd incapable

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of being contented with less than gaining the whole World in the Letter: Such hasting to be rich, as to bear down, run over, and trample upon, all the Bounds of Justice and Truth, Honour and Honesty, Compassion and Humanity, and pursue their base Ends by the vilest Methods of Dissimulation and Lying, Fraud and Circumvention, Cheating and imposing upon the Credulity and Weakness of others, to the utter Ruin of many Thousands of Persons and Families, and to the endangering of our very Constitution. And I wish I had not Reason to add, that this hydropical, unnatural, unquenchable Thirst after Riches, has been too Epidemical, and too generally spread itself among Persons of all Sorts.

And if this be our Case, may we not with Reason believe that God has had a Controversy with us upon this Head? He is many times pleased in the Punishment he inflicts to point out the Sin that provoked it, by the Analogy of the Judgment to the Crime. When *Jeremy* had complain'd of the *Jews* in cap. viii. ver. 10. *That every one, from the least even to the greatest, was given to Covetousness*; the Punishment which he threatens from God upon them, ver. 13. is, *I will surely consume them, saith the Lord; there shall be no Grapes on the Vine, nor Figs on the Fig-Tree,*

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Tree, and the Leaf shall fade, and the things that I have given them shall pass away from them.

Have we not seen something like this verify'd upon us? Has not our Covetousness produced sad Effects to the hurting of our Publick Credit, and the putting most private Persons, even such as were innocently, or not at all concerned in the late Transactions, under very great Straits and Difficulties? And as for many of those, who were the boldest, and thought themselves the most successful Adventurers; who had, in Imagination, got vast Riches, amass'd mighty Treasures, almost commensurate to their large Desires; how have they been disappointed, and too late discovered, that they have been only amused with a pleasing Dream, and *after they had slept their Sleep, have found nothing!*

I say not this, God knows, to insult the Misfortunes of any, but to put every one upon enquiring, how far he has been guilty of this inordinate and immoderate *Love of this World, and the Things of it*, which has produced such sad Effects.

The other General I mention'd was, a wretched Neglect of those immortal Souls, the Value whereof, I had, in some measure, laid before you.

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And as to this, whoever observes the Lives of the Generality of Men, if he judges of their Faith by their Practice, must conclude, that they do not believe, or at least consider, that they have any such Things as immortal Souls to take Care of, or that they are deserving of their Care. The only Thought that too many seem to have, is, *what they shall eat, what they shall drink, and where-withal they shall be clothed*; how they may pamper and adorn the Body, and gratify their sensual Appetites: But it would be a puzzling Question, if one should ask them, When they had employ'd any serious Moments in considering, whether there were any Life after this, and what would be their Condition in it if there were?

To this Infidelity or stupid Thoughtlessness, are owing that Contempt of Religion, that Neglect of God's Worship, that Profanation of his Name, Day, and House, that Injustice and Oppression, that Riot and Lewdness, that general Dissolution of Manners, which appear so barefaced; and which 'twere hardly possible Men could be guilty of, who were thoroughly convinced, and did frequently and seriously reflect, that the End of these things is Death eternal, the Loss of their immortal Soul, and all that inconceivable

able and endless Misery, which, I have shew'd, is included in that Phrase.

Here then let every one again retire within himself, examine his Heart, search how it has been affected to his Soul or to the World; and if the former has been neglected by him, and the latter has engrossed his Affections, Time, and Care, let him in all worldly Calamities, that shall befall him, acknowledge the Justice of God in punishing such a wicked and foolish Preference, by depriving him of the things he had so much over-valued: Yea, let him adore the Goodness of God in laying such an Affliction upon him, which, though for the present it may seem not joyous but grievous; yet, if he makes the right Use of it, will afterwards yield him the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness. For what reasonable Use can one make of the Loss of worldly Enjoyments, but being convinced of the Vanity and Uncertainty of them, to withdraw his Affections and Cares from such false and fading Objects, and place them upon such as will not deceive nor forsake him; to cease his Endeavours after gaining the World, and direct them wholly to the saving his Soul? Which is the Method I propose of Redress for those Evils, into the Causes of which we have been now enquiring.

And

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And this is the only and most certain Method: By which I do not mean, that the heartiest Concern and truest Care for a Man's Spiritual Estate, will always prevent or remove Temporal Calamities; but it will arm him so completely against them, that he shall not be hurt by them, which nothing else can do. A Man under uneasy Reflections upon his unhappy Circumstances, may endeavour to drown or amuse them, by Riot and Intemperance, by Business, Conversation, or Diversions; but alas! he cannot always run away from himself: These are at best but poor Suspensions of his tormenting Thoughts, which will find Intervals to return upon him with greater Force. He only can bear up under the Miseries of this Life, who has a comfortable Prospect of being eternally happy in the next: And such an one cannot only bear up under, but triumph over them; Let him be stript of all his earthly Enjoyments, and reduced to the meanest Circumstances of Life; *The Light of God's Countenance puts greater Joy into his Heart, than they find, whose Corn, and Wine, and Oil increase: Though the Fig-Tree shall not blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vines; the Labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yield no Meat; the Flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls;*
yet

yet will he rejoice in the Lord, he will joy in the God of his Salvation.

He looks upon himself to be what he really is, a *Stranger* in this World, seeking his Country; a Traveller upon his Journey, to take Possession of a Kingdom, which it is his heavenly Father's good Pleasure to give him; making his Way to the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, where he shall be received by an innumerable Company of Angels, the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, by God the Judge of all; the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant; where that Crown of Glory, which is laid up for him in Heaven, shall be set upon his Head, and where he shall be for ever with God, in whose Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at whose Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore. And can a Man that has such a glorious Prospect at the End of his Journey, be concerned at the Ruggedness of the Road, the Inclemency of the Weather, the Meanness of the Accommodation, or any Difficulties or Dangers he meets with in the Way; when he knows his Journey is certain, and can be but short; that the greatest Opposition he shall encounter, the severest Treatment he can have, cannot defeat it, cannot so much as retard his Progress in it, but may hasten his Arrival

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Arrival at the End of it. Thus the Man, who has a well-grounded Hope of the Salvation of his Soul, is Proof against all the greatest Miseries in this World.

But this is a Hope, which no wicked Man, while he continues such, can have; his future Prospect cannot support his Mind under present Calamities, but must sink it more deeply, for it is only a certain looking for of Judgment, and of fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversary.

Is there then no Redress for such an one? Yes, let the wicked Man turn away from his Wickedness that he hath committed, and do that which is Lawful and Right, and he shall save his Soul alive: Let him break off his Sin by Righteousness, and his Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor, and it may be a Lengthning of his Tranquillity.

True Repentance, which consists not in a transient Sorrow for our Sins, because they have exposed us to Sufferings, in weak Purposes, or faint Endeavours to forsake them, or in external Performances; but in such a real and thorough Change of the Mind from this World to God, from Sin to Holiness, as shall appear by as true and thorough a Change of the Life and Manners, by ceasing to do Evil, learning to do Good, denying all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and living soberly, righteously,

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righteously, and godly in this present World, by keeping ourselves from the Pollutions that are in the World through Lust, and by practising whatsoever things are Honest, Just, Pure, Lovely, and of good Report; in short, by conforming the Tenor of our Lives to the Divine Will, by sincerely endeavouring, according to our Capacities and Opportunities, to promote the Honour of God, and the Good of Mankind: I say, such a Repentance puts the Sinner into the happy State I have before mentioned, gives him that blessed Hope of eternal Glory hereafter, which will arm and secure him from being hurt by the severest Afflictions that can assaile him here.

And as this is the only Way of making particular Persons easy under any Calamities, so is it the best Method of removing any Publick Evils which a Nation suffers, and of preventing the impending ones it fears, if the Inhabitants would generally go into it: A Method much more certain than the wisest Schemes, which the ablest and honestest Politicians can project for these Purposes. These may be disappointed, but of the Success of that we are assured from the Word of God, who declares in the xxviii of Jeremy, at the 7th Verse, *At what time I shall speak concerning a Nation and concerning a Kingdom,*
to

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to pluck up, and pull down and destroy: If that
Nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn
from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that
I thought to do unto them.

But if a Nation should be so generally cor-
rupted, that there should not be found in it
so many righteous Persons, as God would
for their Sakes spare the Land; if a People
have so filled up the Measure of their Iniqui-
ties, that God will not hearken to the Inter-
cession of a Noah, Daniel and Job, on their
Behalf, for their Deliverance; yet the few
good Men, who by their holy Lives and fer-
vent Prayers, have been labouring to turn
away God's Wrath from their Country, have
this comfortable Reflection, that they have
done their best; and tho' for want of the As-
sistance of others in the good Work, their
Endeavours have not proved successful for
the saving the Nation, they shall be effectual
for the saving of their own Souls.

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